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AUTHOR Hoffman, Lee McGraw
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ABSTRACT

The school year 1991-92 was the first in which states reported school district level data on the numbers and types of dropouts in the Common Core of Data (CCD) Agency Universe Survey. Information included numbers of male and female dropouts in 5 racial/ethnic categories for grades 7 through 12. The CCD defined a dropout as a student who had been enrolled at any time during the previous school year and was not enrolled on October 1 of the current school year. Because it was the introductory year of such reporting, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) asked the states how successful they had been in meeting the requirements. Across the 50 states and the District of Columbia, 43 states (including the District of Columbia) reported dropout counts by school district, with the number expected to rise in 1993-94. Of the 43 reporting states, 14 followed CCD standards so well that NCES can publish their 1991-92 data. This study identified ways in which the state reports differed from CCD standards. Issues of reporting comprehensiveness are explored. Nineteen tables (including six in an appendix) and one figure present survey findings. Three appendixes contain Dropout Task Force report, dropout reporting interview questions, and technical notes. (SLD)

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NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS

Methodology Report

March 1995

State Dropout Data Collection Practices: 1991–92 School Year

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State Dropout Data Collection Practices: 1991–92 School Year

Lee McGraw Hoffman
Elementary/Secondary Education Statistics Division

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement

NCES 95-690

U.S. Department of Education
Richard W. Riley
Secretary

Office of Educational Research and Improvement
Sharon P. Robinson
Assistant Secretary

National Center for Education Statistics
Emerson J. Elliott
Commissioner

National Center for Education Statistics

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March 1995

Contact:
Lee M. Hoffman
(202) 219–1621

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State Dropout Coordinators

Alabama	Cassandra Ramey
Alaska	Bob Silverman
Arizona	Caryn Shoemaker
Arkansas	Ann Davis
California	James A. Fulton
Colorado	Jo Ann Keith
Connecticut	Catherine Oleksiw
Delaware	Robert Boozer
District Columbia	Kathy Tuck
Florida	G. Lavan Dukes, Jr.
Georgia	M. Eugene Wallace, Jr
Hawaii	Thomas Saka
Idaho	Nancy Kaylor
Illinois	Richard Yong
Indiana	Gary Tatlock
Iowa	Jim Gould
Kansas	Gary L. Watson
Kentucky	Scott Trimble
Louisiana	Sue Dishongh
Maine	Frank Antonucci
Maryland	Ricka Markowitz
Massachusetts	Jeffrey Nellhaus
Michigan	Lou Rudder
Minnesota	Carol Hokenson
Mississippi	Jayne Lloyd
Missouri	John Jones
Montana	Dori Nielson
Nebraska	Pamela Tagart
Nevada	David Smith
New Hampshire	Cecile Petrin
New Jersey	David Joseph
New Mexico	Jerry Cavatta
New York	Leonard Powell
North Carolina	Olivia Holmes Oxendine
North Dakota	Ron Torgeson
Ohio	James Daubenmire
Oklahoma	Thomas E. Pickens
Oregon	Bob Jones
Pennsylvania	Roger G. Hummel
Rhode Island	Donley R. Taft
South Carolina	J.C. Ballew
South Dakota	Susan Ryan
Tennessee	Debbie Gilliam
Texas	Bob Barker
Utah	Hal B. Robins
Vermont	Gerald L. Cassell
Virginia	Jerry Matthews
Washington	Edward Strozyk
West Virginia	Doris White
Wisconsin	Elizabeth Ford
Wyoming	Linda Carter
American Samoa	Russell Aab
Guam	Nerissa Bretania-Shafer
No. Mariana Islands	William P. Matson
Puerto Rico	Aida I. Rodriguez
Virgin Islands	Henrita Barber

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Executive Summary
State Dropout Data Collection Practices: 1991-92 School Year

The 1991-92 school year was the first for which states reported school district level data on the numbers and types of dropouts in the Common Core of Data (CCD) Agency Universe Survey. The information included the numbers of male and female dropouts in five racial/ethnic categories for each grade, 7 through 12. There are a number of valid ways to define "dropout." Put very simply, the CCD defined a student as a dropout if he or she had been enrolled at any time during the previous school year and was not enrolled on October 1 of the current school year.

Because 1991-92 was the introductory year of a standard definition and reporting procedures for this complicated statistic, NCES asked state CCD Coordinators how successful they had been in meeting the requirements. Here are some of the major findings:

- Across the 50 states and the District of Columbia, 43 states (including the District of Columbia) reported dropout counts by school district. By the 1993-94 school year, this number should increase to 49. Four of the 43 reporting states omitted racial/ethnic detail, sex, or dropout counts for grades 7 and 8. All but three states anticipate reporting these details by 1994-95.

- Of these 43 states, 14 followed the CCD standards sufficiently closely that NCES can publish their 1991-92 data. A major problem was that some states did not remove from their dropout rolls students who had left during the previous school year but returned by October 1 of the current school year. Under the most optimistic estimates, 44 states would comply with this requirement by 1994-95; a more pessimistic assessment of states' ability to adopt CCD standards reduces this to 33 states.

- The CCD definition attributes summer dropouts (students who complete one school year but fail to enroll in the next) to the school year and grade for which they fail to report. Thirty-one states followed this practice in 1991-92.

- Other discrepancies from the CCD standard included failing to enforce a cut-off date close to October 1 in deciding when a "no-show" student was a summer dropout (23 states) and failing to count as dropouts those students who left secondary education to enroll in an adult education GED program (10 states).

- NCES compared two methods of computing a dropout rate, one using as its denominator student membership in the year for which dropouts were reported, and the other averaging membership across two years. There did not appear to be any great differences between the two rates, except in districts with relatively large numbers of dropouts (more than 10 percent of students), for which the unadjusted dropout rate was higher.

The purpose of this follow-up study was to identify cases in which state dropout reports differed from the standard CCD definition and procedures. There was extensive

variation in 1991-92, but dropout data rapidly are becoming more comparable. As an example of states working cooperatively to produce a complex, uniform statistic through their administrative records systems, the dropout statistic appears to be working its way toward success.

Part 1. State Dropout Data Collection Practices: 1991-92 School Year

Introduction

Students who leave high school without completing the education needed to prepare them for productive employment or further education have been a longstanding concern to policy makers. Underneath the educational action and academic interest that this concern has generated lies a simple, consistently observed fact: dropouts as a group fare less well than their peers who have completed 12 years of schooling.

Interest in Dropout Statistics

In 1986 the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) began work with the Council of Chief State School Officers to examine NCES' collection of elementary and secondary education data reported from the administrative records of public schools and agencies. This collection was the four-part Common Core of Data, or CCD, which consists of a state-level collection of data about revenues and expenditures for public education,[1] and state-, school district-, and school-level collections of other data such as numbers and types of schools, education staff members, pupils, and graduates. One recommendation from this examination was that NCES add a dropout count to the CCD, with the caveat that states would have to adopt a nationally consistent definition of "dropout" in order for this new statistic to be usefully comparable.[2]

The Hawkins-Stafford School Improvement Amendments of 1988 directed the Commissioner of Education Statistics to establish a federal-state cooperative education statistics system that would improve the quality of education data for policy making at national, state and local levels. The same legislation required the Commissioner to report to Congress each year on the second Tuesday after Labor Day about the rate of school dropouts and completions in the Nation (under new legislation, this report is no longer mandatory).

The interest in nationally uniform, state-comparable dropout statistics converged from several sources, and NCES responded with a coordinated program of activities. Beginning in September, 1989, NCES published a national dropout and completions report based on information from the October, 1988 Current Population Survey of the Bureau of the Census and information from NCES' own longitudinal High School and Beyond Study.[3] NCES continues this yearly report through the present. It provides a consistent picture of national and regional dropout rates over time, and applies a uniform definition of "dropout." However, neither the Current Population Survey nor any of NCES' longitudinal surveys employs a

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[1]"Public education" is used for prekindergarten through 12th grade throughout this paper unless otherwise noted.

[2]See F. Johnson, 1988, *Dropout Statistics: An Update of State Definitions and Collection Practices*, U.S. Department of Education, NCES.

[3]See M. Frase, 1989, *Dropout Rates in the United States: 1988*, U.S. Department of Education, NCES.

sample that is large enough to provide state-representative findings. As useful as the annual *Dropout Rates in the United States* is for national purposes, it does not describe differences among states or school districts.

CCD Dropout Statistic

A second major activity was the development of a uniform dropout statistic intended to be collected through the CCD, and to report the number of school dropouts from each public school district in the 50 states, District of Columbia, and outlying areas of American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. During 1987 and 1988, staff from NCES worked with representatives from state and local education agencies and professional associations to agree upon a definition of "dropout" that could be adopted and implemented by all states. The definition upon which NCES and the states agreed was the following:

A dropout is an individual who:

(1) Was enrolled in school at some time during the previous school year;
(2) Was not enrolled at the beginning of the current school year;
(3) Has not graduated from high school or completed a state- or district-approved educational program; and
(4) Does not meet any of the following exclusionary conditions:
   a) transfer to another public school district, private school, or state- or district-approved education program;
   b) temporary absence due to suspension or school-approved illness; or
   c) death.

There are several key characteristics that distinguish this definition from others that may appear similar.

- The dropout count is part of the CCD Agency Universe (school district) survey. As it is incorporated in the CCD, the dropout statistic:

  ✓ is an "event" count of the number of students who have dropped out during a 365-day period from the first day of school (operationally set as October 1) to the day preceding the beginning of the next school year (September 30);

  ✓ is computed on October 1 for students who have dropped out during the previous school year;

  ✓ considers students who are not accounted for on October 1 (i.e., who are "status unknown") to be dropouts.

- "Summer dropouts," or students who complete one school year but fail to enroll for the next, are counted as dropouts from the year and grade for which they fail to report. In effect, their failure to enroll treats them as October 1 (first day) dropouts.

- The dropout count is based on the grade in which the student was or should be enrolled (including grades 7 through 12), rather than on the student's age.

- "Dropping out" is conceptualized as "leaving school without completing a recognized secondary program." Thus, students who leave secondary school for activities such as enlisting in the military or enrolling in an adult education GED class are counted as dropouts, even though these choices could be productive ones. Students who leave school after reaching the age beyond which school districts are required to provide services, and who have not completed a recognized program (which can include a special education individualized education program) are considered dropouts.

- Dropout counts are used to create an event dropout rate, that is, a rate which shows the proportion of students who have dropped out of school during a single school year. The CCD count of membership, or students enrolled on October 1 of the school year, is the basis, or denominator, of the dropout rate.

Dropout Field Test

Those who had participated in developing the definition recognized that a field test was needed to determine whether school districts actually could collect the data as specified. There was also a secondary question of which membership count to use as the denominator. Theoretically, a count of students in membership at the end of the school year could be preferable because it would assign students who transferred during the year to the school district that received them. However, the CCD only collects an October 1 membership count. The effect of using a beginning- or end-of-school-year membership count on the size of the dropout rate needed to be tested before deciding whether to add the burden of an extra, end-of-year membership count.

In the 1989-90 school year a sample of volunteering school districts from 26 states, the District of Columbia, and two outlying areas carried out a field test of the proposed dropout collection. A contract to assess the results of this field test was awarded to the American Institutes for Research, whose researchers visited school sites, analyzed findings, and tracked a number of school leavers to determine whether districts could accurately distinguish dropouts from students who had left for other reasons. The overall findings of this assessment were that school districts generally reported accurate counts (if anything, they

were more likely to misclassify transfers as dropouts) and that there was no meaningful difference between rates calculated on the basis of fall or end of year membership counts.[4]

Issues resulting from field test. NCES introduced two changes at the conclusion of the field test, and these changes in turn raised several issues. First, the definition that was field tested attributed summer dropouts to the year and grade in which they were enrolled. Thus, a student completing the 8th grade in 1988-89 who did not re-enroll was counted as an 8th grade dropout for 1988-89. Because a number of states said that this ran counter to local practice, NCES changed the reporting directions to have such a student attributed to the grade and year for which he or she did not report. In the example cited, the student (who had successfully completed the 8th grade) would be considered a 9th grade dropout for 1989-90. This change immediately affected several states that had established reporting and data processing systems under the original rule; it later caused problems with some school districts that had difficulty in following the status of pupils across multiple years. (Some states reported that their districts used automated student record systems that could carry only a year's data.)

The second change introduced by NCES was in the denominator. To compensate somewhat for student transfers during the year, NCES proposed to use as the dropout rate denominator the average membership across two October counts. This would introduce a partial adjustment for a student who was enrolled in more than one district during the year (and whose "risk of dropping out" should conceivably be shared across both districts). This change placed no extra reporting burden on school districts, but did raise questions about how comparable the rate would be under various student transfer and migration conditions.

Initial 1991-92 Implementation

Accounting for every student who leaves grades 7 through 12, and reporting those who drop out by sex and racial-ethnic status for each of more than 12,000 school districts, is not a simple procedure. NCES provided sample training materials and other resources through the National Cooperative Education Statistics System in 1990 and 1991 to help states introduce the new dropout statistic. The dropout count was added to the CCD Agency Universe survey in 1992-93, to report students who had dropped out in 1991-92 (including the summer, 1991 dropouts). This first implementation of the statistic will be referred to as the 1991-92 report throughout this paper.

At the January, 1993 meeting of the National Forum on Education Statistics, a representative from the Arizona state education agency presented a list of criticisms of the CCD dropout statistic to the National Education Statistics Agenda Committee of the National Forum on Education Statistics. The Forum requested that a task force be established to examine the statistic and recommend whether or not NCES should revise the proposed denominator for the dropout rate. This task force of 14 state education agency and NCES

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[4]American Institutes for Research, 1992, *National Dropout Statistics Field Test Evaluation*, U.S. Department of Education, NCES.

staff persons met twice, conducting an extensive analysis of the dropout statistic, and making several recommendations.[5]

The Task Force presented its report to the Forum, which in turn made several recommendations to NCES. One was that NCES provide improved instructions on how to apply the dropout statistic. Another was that NCES use the October 1 membership count, rather than the averaged membership, as a denominator for the dropout statistic. NCES agreed to distribute simplified instructions and to use both single October 1 and the averaged denominators in its publication of the 1991-92 data.

Finally, the Forum requested that NCES survey the states to determine how they had applied the requirements of the dropout definition and, therefore, how comparable the 1991-92 data were from state to state. A condition of this survey was that it identify cases in which state law or policy required a dropout definition that differed from the NCES definition.

Survey of 1991-92 State Practices

Between August and December of 1993, an NCES staff person telephoned the CCD Coordinator in each state education agency, requesting the name of a contact who was knowledgeable about the state's dropout collection and reporting system. Because they are not reported in United States totals, the outlying areas were not interviewed. The identified contact was then consulted via telephone, using the questions shown in Appendix B.[6] (Not all aspects were reviewed with states that did not report a dropout count.) Each question, shown in italics, introduces the section of this report in which the findings are discussed. The section concludes with a summary table showing the potential impact of state practices on the comparability of dropout data.

The questions identified variations from the NCES definition in terms of what information was reported (missing detail) and under which conditions school leavers were counted as dropouts (example, whether the distinction between GED adult education and secondary alternative programs was maintained). The questions also addressed several potential problems in state comparability raised by the Task Force. These included such things as whether a state counted students who left school but returned before the close of that school year (so-called "recaptures") as dropouts.

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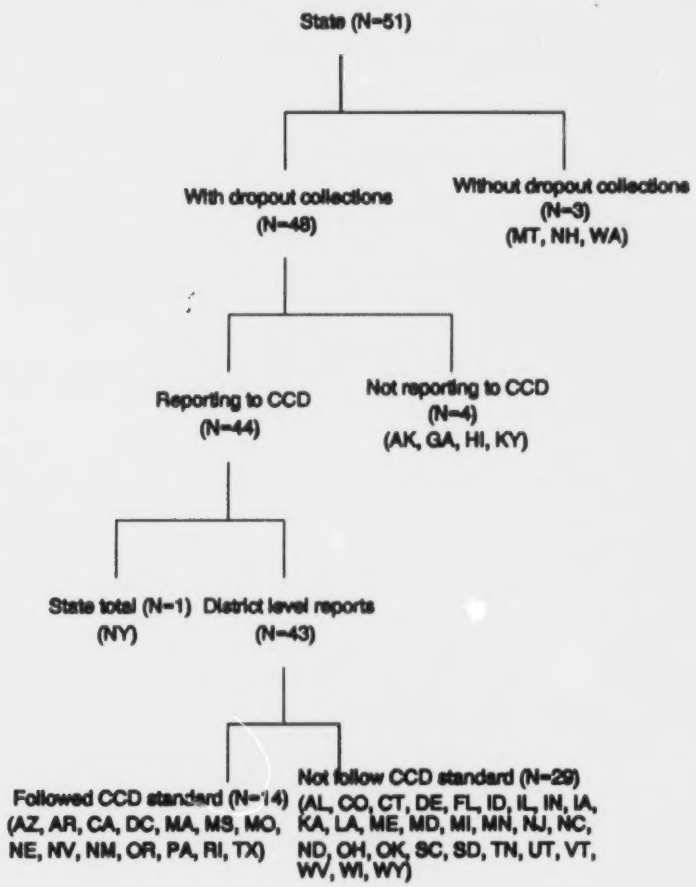
[5]Judy Burnes of Colorado chaired this Task Force, and the group's report is reproduced and discussed in Appendix A. The National Forum on Education Statistics comprises the Federal and state education agencies and professional education associations that implement the National Cooperative Education Statistics System.

[6]Not all aspects were discussed with those states that did not report dropout data. This report incorporates responses to the April 7, 1994 correspondence and to Dropout Coordinator comments on two earlier drafts of the paper.

Collecting Versus Reporting States

As figure 1 depicts, not all states collected and reported dropout data. (This paper does not include the outlying areas. The outlying areas that reported dropouts are published in other NCES reports.) Among the 50 states and the District of Columbia, 48 had dropout collections in 1991-92 and three did not. Of those with dropout collections, four states elected not to report on the CCD. This left a total of 44 states reporting CCD dropout data. One of those states reported a single total for dropouts from all grades; 29 did not follow the CCD standards closely enough to allow publication of their data; and 14 reported publishable dropout counts.

Figure 1.--States reporting dropouts and adherence to CCD standards


State (N=51)
With dropout collections (N=48)
Without dropout collections (N=3) (MT, NH, WA)
Reporting to CCD (N=44)
Not reporting to CCD (N=4) (AK, GA, HI, KY)
State total (N=1) (NY)
District level reports (N=43)
Followed CCD standard (N=14) (AZ, AR, CA, DC, MA, MS, MO, NE, NV, NM, OR, PA, RI, TX)
Not follow CCD standard (N=29) (AL, CO, CT, DE, FL, ID, IL, IN, IA, KA, LA, ME, MD, MI, MN, NJ, NC, ND, OH, OK, SC, SD, TN, UT, VT, WV, WI, WY)

Throughout this report, percentages are based on a total of 51: the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Individual tables include states for whom the information is relevant. Thus, questions about reporting practices include all 48 states with a dropout collection now or in the near future, even when these states did not report a dropout count in the 1992-93 CCD. Tables describing 1991-92 data include the 14 states that reported analyzable numbers, or all 43 states with school district dropout data, depending on the topic.

Response Rate

Of the 50 states and the District of Columbia, seven did not report any dropout statistics for 1991-92 (table 1). In addition to these states, New York reported a single total across all grades, and is considered a nonrespondent for analytical purposes. The 43 agencies that provided data represent 84 percent of the states. Forty of these 43 (78 percent of all states) reported data at the level of detail requested, that is, by sex within racial/ethnic group for grades 7 through 12. Idaho and Michigan reported dropouts for only grades 9 through 12 and did not provide the sex or racial/ethnic categories. Nevada reported all the requested detail, but did not include dropouts from grades 7 and 8.

Maryland, which is included as one of the fully reporting states, suppressed information for any category in which the student membership was less than 20. Thus, for example, if a school district had only 15 male Asian students in the 8th grade, no dropouts were reported for this group in that district. The District of Columbia did not allocate its ungraded dropouts to grades but reported them as a separate category. NCES[7] distributed these ungraded pupils across grades 7 through 12.

Nonresponding states. Alaska had collected dropout data in accord with the national definition, but decided to withhold the information until NCES made a final decision about whether the definition or rate would change in response to the Task Force recommendations. Georgia had changed student record software programs during the year, with dropout information lost in the process; upon examining the results, the state questioned the dropout results and declined to forward them. Hawaii also mistrusted the data collected, in part because what the respondent termed "convoluted programming" had been used to derive the data from existing systems, and in part because the data gave none of the sex or racial/ethnic detail. Kentucky's dropout statistic was modelled after the CCD, but data were not submitted because the state coordinator did not feel the numbers complied sufficiently with the CCD requirements. Montana delayed introducing a dropout collection because of the July, 1993 Forum action but hopes to begin counting dropouts by 1993-94 (reporting in 1994-95). New Hampshire anticipates that it will be several years before a dropout collection is begun. Washington found its collection delayed by the state's change from an aggregated data system to an individual record system, but intends to report dropouts for grades 9-12 by 1993-94, and

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[7]The data were processed and edited by the U.S. Bureau of the Census under an interagency agreement with NCES. Ungraded students were also prorated across the membership counts for grades 7 through 12 in all states with ungraded students.

Table 1.--States reporting dropout data, missing detail, prohibitions against reporting detail, and whether state and Common Core of Data reports are the same: 1991–92 school year (all states)

State	State reported dropout data	State, CCD define same	Completeness of collection: Missing detail	Completeness of collection: Reporting prohibitions
Alabama	Yes	Yes		
Alaska*	No	No	No report	
Arizona	Yes	No		
Arkansas	Yes	Yes		
California	Yes	Yes		
Colorado	Yes	No		
Connecticut	Yes	Yes		
Delaware	Yes	No		
District of Columbia	Yes	Yes		
Florida	Yes	No		Under 16
Georgia*	No	Yes	No report	
Hawaii*	No	Yes	No report	
Idaho	Partial	No	No Gr 7–8, race, sex	
Illinois	Yes	Yes		
Indiana	Yes	Yes		
Iowa	Yes	Yes		
Kansas	Yes	Yes		
Kentucky*	No	Yes	No race, sex	
Louisiana	Yes	Yes		
Maine	Yes	Yes		
Maryland	Partial	Yes	Suppress small cells	Denominator <20
Massachusetts	Yes	No		
Michigan	Partial	Yes	No Gr 7–8, race, sex	
Minnesota	Yes	Yes		
Mississippi	Yes	No		
Missouri	Yes	Yes		
Montana	No	Yes	No report	
Nebraska	Yes	Yes		
Nevada	Partial	Yes	No Gr 7–8	
New Hampshire	No	No	No report	
New Jersey	Yes	Yes		
New Mexico	Yes	Yes		
New York	Partial	Yes	No detail	
North Carolina	Yes	Yes		
North Dakota	Yes	Yes		
Ohio	Yes	Yes		
Oklahoma	Yes	No		
Oregon	Yes	Yes		
Pennsylvania	Yes	Yes		
Rhode Island	Yes	No		
South Carolina	Yes	No		
South Dakota	Yes	Yes		
Tennessee	Yes	Yes		
Texas	Yes	Yes		
Utah	Yes	Yes		
Vermont	Partial	Yes	No race, sex	
Virginia	Yes	No		
Washington	No	--	No report	
West Virginia	Yes	No		
Wisconsin	Yes	Yes		
Wyoming	Yes	Yes		
SUMMARY--Practice agrees with CCD:				
Agree	38	36	38	40
Disagree	7	14	7	2
Partly, unclear	6	0	6	0
No response	0	1	0	0

-- No response.
*State collected but did not report 1991–92 dropout data.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data, 1992–93.

all grades 7-12 by 1994-95. Finally, New York, whose single dropout figure was not usable for 1991-92, will report full detail for its 1992-93 dropouts.

If state plans proceed as intended, all states except Kentucky, New Hampshire, and possibly Montana will provide dropout counts for 1993-94.

Missing or prohibited detail. State dropout contacts were asked:

> *Your 1992-93 CCD agency survey did not report _____ (interviewer specifies). Is there a law or policy prohibiting you from reporting this detail? Why is it missing?*

Although some states had reported anecdotally that their laws prohibited reporting students under 16 as dropouts, none indicated that these laws prevented them from reporting any of the grades requested in the CCD. Florida is required to treat students in grades kindergarten through 8 as habitual truants, and accordingly reports only dropouts 16 or older (but for all requested grades) on the CCD. As noted earlier, Maryland follows state education agency policy to suppress dropout counts for groups with a membership of fewer than 20 students.

Idaho has begun collecting dropout data by sex and race/ethnicity, and will be able to report this detail for grades 9 through 12 by the 1994-95 school year; it is not clear when dropouts from grades 7-8 will be added. Kentucky will add racial/ethnic detail through its developing student record system and anticipates that this information will be fully available within the next five years. Because Michigan law only requires a school dropout/retention rate, the state coordinator did not feel the additional detail would be reported any time soon. Nevada is adding grades 7-8 to its dropout collection in 1994-95. New York stated that its single number would be replaced next year by counts for the requested grade levels and detail. Finally, Vermont did not report race/ethnicity or sex and it is not clear when these details will be added.

State and CCD Definitions

One possible outcome of state prohibitions against reporting certain detail was that states might use definitions and procedures that differed from the CCD standard in producing their own state reports. While this would not affect state-to-state comparisons using CCD data at the national level, it would require explanation in national reports to alert readers to differences between a state's own reports and figures published from the CCD. State contact persons were asked:

> *Do you use the same definition and procedures for the CCD dropout report as you do for your state reports? If not, what are the differences?*

Table 1 indicates whether the state dropout reports employed the same definition and procedures as the CCD dropout statistic; 36 states did so (of these, six did not collect all grades or racial/ethnic detail). The following paragraphs describe all of the states in which

the contact person responded "no" to this question. Some differences were also captured under more specific questions, and are repeated under those headings.

Alaska, South Carolina and Virginia adopted the original CCD definition into state regulation, and now differ from the current definition by attributing summer dropouts to the previous year. Arizona follows the CCD dropout definition but uses total cumulative enrollment (not the October 1 headcount) in calculating dropout rate. Colorado collects data on a July-June cycle, and does not remove students who return in the fall from its dropout count. Delaware and West Virginia also fail to remove these October returnees from the dropout roll, but will do so in the future. Idaho reports dropouts as a percent of the total grade 9-12 enrollment on the last day of school.

Massachusetts counts school leavers who re-enroll in the fall as dropouts for its state report, but not for the CCD. Similarly, Mississippi reports summer dropouts for the CCD but not for its state report. The New Hampshire collection will treat students who return at the beginning of the school year as dropouts, and the state has not made provisions for adjusting these counts to the CCD standard. Oklahoma's state report only includes dropouts who are 18 or younger, while requesting that districts include these older dropouts for the CCD report. Rhode Island uses a July-June reporting period that differs slightly from the CCD.

Florida should be noted as a special case. Because both CCD and state dropout reports are generated by the same student record system, the coordinator did not feel that the definitions differed. Although the state and CCD reports produced from this system are not the same, they draw upon the same group of students, with those dropouts under 16 years of age excluded.

Treatment of Summer Dropouts

> *How did you report summer dropouts, that is, students who completed the 1990-91 school year but did not show up for school at the beginning of the 1991-92 school year? Were they dropouts for the year the completed or the year in which they did not return? For the grade they completed or the grade in which they did not enroll?*

Summer dropouts are students who complete one year (or are not absent enough to be considered dropouts) but who fail to enroll at the beginning of the next school year. The CCD dropout definition required that a student who was not enrolled on October 1 be counted as a dropout from the school year and grade for which he or she failed to enroll. One of the criticisms of the dropout statistic was about the treatment of summer dropouts: that the procedure required districts to carry students on their books over three school years, as the following example shows.

In school year:	A student who:
1992-93	enrolled in, and completes, 8th grade
1993-94	fails to enroll in 9th grade on October 1, with no evidence of transfer to another school, is
1994-95	reported as a 1993-94, 9th grade dropout on the 1994-95 CCD.

Seventeen states (33%) did not follow the CCD definition, but instead counted pupils who failed to enroll in the fall as dropouts from the previous school year (table 2). Thirty-one states reported summer dropouts as dropouts from the year in which they failed to enroll, as requested. The question of how summer dropouts were reported was moot for three states that did not have a CCD-compatible dropout collection.

All of the states reporting summer dropouts correctly were able to report summer dropouts in their 1991-92 school year data. Sixteen (31 percent of all states) of the 17 states that counted summer dropouts under the year they had completed also counted these students as dropouts from the grade in which they were enrolled during that year. However, Indiana included the summer dropouts in the count for the grade these students would have enrolled in had they registered for school in the fall.

Effects of summer dropout classification. Counting students who fail to enroll in the fall as dropouts from the prior, rather than the current, year would affect annual dropout totals to the extent that there were sizable changes in the numbers of dropouts from one year to the next. At the national level, NCES reports suggest gradual changes, not sharp differences, in the numbers of young people dropping out of school from year to year. However, there are differences in dropout rates for grades. The CCD field test, for example, reported dropout rates of less than 2 percent for grades 7 and 8, and over 5 percent for grades 9 through 12. Counting students who have been promoted as dropouts from the earlier grade could distort grade-level dropout rates without affecting the comparability of overall (multi-grade) dropout counts. The effects of this problem are estimated later in the discussion on 1991-92 data quality.

Recapturing Stop-Outs

The CCD dropout definition counts as dropouts only those previously enrolled students who are *not* enrolled on October 1. This definition involves recapturing students who have been termed by some as "stop-outs," or temporary dropouts, and removing them from the dropout roster. However, school district record keeping systems may break these stop-outs into two different groups, with different reporting consequences for each:

- a student who re-enrolls before the end of the school year in which the student dropped out; and
- a student who re-enrolls by October 1 of the following school year.

Education agency staff were asked how their states classified students in these two situations. The results are shown in table 2.

Table 2.--Year and grade to which summer dropouts are attributed and classification of students re-enrolling by end of year or beginning of next year: 1991-92 school year (all states)

State	Summer dropouts attributed to		Returnees counted as dropouts	
	Prior year	Prior grade	End of year	Next year
Alabama				Yes
Alaska*	Yes	Yes		Yes
Arizona				
Arkansas				
California				
Colorado	Yes	Yes		Yes
Connecticut	Yes	Yes		
Delaware				Yes
District of Columbia				
Florida				Yes
Georgia*	Yes	Yes		
Hawaii*	Yes	Yes		
Idaho				Yes
Illinois				Yes
Indiana	Yes		Yes	Yes
Iowa	Yes	Yes		Yes
Kansas			Yes	Yes
Kentucky*	Yes	Yes		
Louisiana	Yes	Yes		Yes
Maine	Yes	Yes		Yes
Maryland				Yes
Massachusetts				
Michigan	Yes	Yes		
Minnesota				Yes
Mississippi				
Missouri				
Montana*	--	--	--	--
Nebraska				
Nevada				
New Hampshire*	--	--	--	--
New Jersey				Yes
New Mexico				
New York				
North Carolina	Yes	Yes		
North Dakota	Yes	Yes		
Ohio	Yes	Yes		Yes
Oklahoma				Yes
Oregon				
Pennsylvania				
Rhode Island				
South Carolina	Yes	Yes		
South Dakota				Yes
Tennessee				Yes
Texas				
Utah				Yes
Vermont	Yes	Yes		Yes
Virginia	Yes	Yes		Varies
Washington*	--	--	--	--
West Virginia				Yes
Wisconsin				Yes
Wyoming				Yes
SUMMARY--Practice agrees with CCD:				
Agree	31	32	46	24
Disagree	17	16	2	23
Partly, unclear	0	0	0	1
No response	3	3	3	3

-- Not reporting.
*Alaska, Georgia, Hawaii, and Kentucky collected but did not report dropout data; Montana, New Hampshire, and Washington did not collect dropout data.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data, 1992-93.

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End of year re-enrollments. The question used to determine how these students were categorized was:

> *How did you classify students who dropped out during 1991-92 but re-enrolled before the end of that school year?*

Two states (Indiana and Kansas) count students who leave but re-enroll before the end of the year as dropouts. In Kansas, districts have the option of counting such students as dropouts and the coordinator felt this was likely to happen if a returning student had failed one or both semesters.

October 1 re-enrollments. The question asked of the state contact person was:

> *How did you classify students who dropped out and did not re-enroll by the end of 1991-92, but who did re-enroll at the beginning of the 1992-93 school year?*

States were more likely to count as dropouts those students who did not return until the beginning of the subsequent school year. This was the practice in 23 or 24 states (45 or 47 percent). The situation was ambiguous in Virginia, where a stop-out was counted as a dropout unless he or she completed the missed course work in summer school.

Effects of counting "stop-outs." States that count returned stop-outs as dropouts logically will have greater numbers, and higher rates, of dropouts than those states that adhere to the CCD definition. The Dropout Statistic Review Task Force analyzed dropout data from two states and one school district that were able to identify when (during or before the school year) students dropped out. In one state, failure to "recapture" returning dropouts raised the overall dropout rate from 8.3 percent to 11.1 percent. In the school district, counting these returnees as dropouts raised the rate from 8.6 percent to 9.7 percent. These analyses do not constitute a representative sample of states, but in the broader field test review, it was found that in some relatively small or mid-sized school districts the number of dropouts reported by the end of the school year was greater than the number reported after the summer was over -- because the number of "stop-outs" who returned to school was greater than the number of students deciding to drop out over the summer. These findings support anecdotal reports from the states that the number of students who return to make one more attempt at school in the fall is substantial enough that states that consider these students dropouts should not be compared with states that remove them from the dropout rolls.

Other Education or Training

Students who remain in an elementary-secondary program are not considered dropouts, regardless of the content of that program. On the other hand, students who leave high school and enter into an adult education or training program are to be reported as dropouts. State contacts were asked whether they categorized students as dropouts or continuing in school under several conditions. The results are displayed in table 3.

Table 3.--Dropout report enrollment cut-off date, date enforcement, opportunity to correct reports, and status of transfers to other programs: 1991-92 school year (all states)

State	Reporting Dates: Enrollment cut-off date	Late enrollees permitted	Report can be corrected	Other Programs: Alternative programs	Adult GED	Secondary GED	Early admissions	Job Corps	Twelfth grade leavers
Alabama	Varies	Yes		C	D	C	C	C	D
Alaska	October		No	C	D	C	C	N	N
Arizona	October		No	C	D	N	C	D	N
Arkansas	Late		No	C	?	C	C	C	D
California	Late	Yes		C	C	C	C	D	N
Colorado	End Year			C	?	C	C	C	C
Connecticut	October			C	D	C	C	N	D
Delaware	October			C	?	C	C	D	D
District of Columbia	Late			C	C	C	C	C	N
Florida	Early	Yes		C	C	C	C	D	D
Georgia	October			C	D	C	C	D	D
Hawaii	Early			C	D	C	C	D	C
Idaho	October			C	D	N	C	D	N
Illinois	End Year	Yes		C	D	C	C	N	N
Indiana	October			C	D	C	C	D	N
Iowa	End Year	No cut-off		C	D	N	C	D	C
Kansas	Varies	Yes		C	D	C	C	N	D
Kentucky	--	--	--	C	C	C	C	--	C
Louisiana	October			C	C	C	C	C	Unknown
Maine	October	Yes		C	D	N	C	D	N
Maryland	October	Yes		C	D	N	C	D	D
Massachusetts	October			C	D	C	C	D	D
Michigan	October			C	C	C	C	Varies	Varies
Minnesota	Early	Yes		C	D	N	C	D	D
Mississippi	October			C	D	D	C	Varies	N
Missouri	October			C	D	C	C	D	D
Montana	--	--	--	C	D	C	C	C	D
Nebraska	October	Yes	No	C	D	C	C	C	N
Nevada	Late		No	C	D	C	C	D	D
New Hampshire	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
New Jersey	End Year	Yes	No	C	D	C	N	D	D
New Mexico	October		No	C	D	N	C	D	C
New York	October			C	?	C	C	C	N
North Carolina	Early			C	?	C	C	D	C
North Dakota	Early	--		C	D	C	C	D	Varies
Ohio	Late			C	D	C	C	D	D
Oklahoma	End Year	Yes		C	D	C	C	D	C
Oregon	October			C	D	C	N	D	D
Pennsylvania	Varies	Yes		C	D	C	C	Varies	N
Rhode Island	October			C	Varies	C	C	D	C
South Carolina	Late	Yes	No	C	C	C	C	C	C
South Dakota	End Year	End year		C	D	C	C	Unknown	N
Tennessee	End Year	Yes		C	D	C	C	D	D
Texas	Late	Varies		C	D	C	C	Unknown	Unknown
Utah	End Year	Yes		C	D	N	C	C	D
Vermont	End Year			C	C	C	C	D	D
Virginia	Late			C	D	C	C	D	N
Washington	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
West Virginia	Varies	Monthly		C	C	C	C	D	N
Wisconsin	End Year	Yes		C	D	C	C	D	D
Wyoming	End Year	End year		C	D	N	C	D	N
SUMMARY--Practice agrees with CCD:									
Yes	19	25	30	40	33	47	49	32	37
No	24	20	8	0	10	2	0	11	8
Partly, unclear	4	1	0	0	6	0	0	5	4
No response	4	5	4	2	2	2	2	3	2

-- State does not have a dropout collection.

Response definitions: October = enrollment confirmed within one week before or after October 1
Late = enrollment confirmed more than one week after October 1
Early = Enrollment confirmed more than one week before October 1
End year = enrollment confirmed end of school year
Varies = Practice varies by school districts
D = Dropout
C = Continuing student
N = Not applicable; situation does not occur; alternative credential given

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data -- Data Plan Supplements.

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How did you report students who did not complete high school, but moved from the regular school program to some other type of education or training?

Transfer to an alternative program. Students who move to an alternative school or program run by the local schools are not dropouts. All states reported that they followed the CCD definition and treated these students as continuing their secondary education.

Transfer to adult education GED. Students who leave high school and then enroll in an adult education program preparing them for the test of General Education Development (GED) are to be counted as dropouts, regardless of what agency offers the program. Thirty-three states followed this definition (65 percent of all states), and counted these students as dropouts. However, 10 states (20%) counted them as continuing their secondary schooling. In Rhode Island, such a student was counted as continuing if he or she signed and adhered to a contract to attend GED classes, but was considered a dropout in the absence of this formal commitment. In Arkansas, Colorado, Delaware, New York and North Carolina, transfers to adult education GED are tracked for the remainder of the school year, and reported as dropouts if they leave these programs during the year.[8] Wisconsin is reported as agreeing with the CCD, but it should be noted that state law allows students to enroll in postsecondary programs and remain on the public school rolls as long as the school district confirms that the student continues in school.

Transfer to secondary GED. There are some secondary school programs preparing students for the GED. Students in secondary GED programs are not counted as dropouts under the CCD definition. A total of 39 states (76 percent of all) complied with the CCD definition in this area. An additional eight states (16%) said that such programs are not available and the question is moot. Connecticut and Mississippi consider secondary GED program students to be dropouts, in disagreement with the CCD definition. Connecticut will change this with its 1992-93 school year data, while Mississippi continues to treat all GED training as adult education.

Early admissions. Students who complete high school requirements and are granted early admission to postsecondary school before they receive a high school diploma should not be counted as dropouts. This was the case in every state that had such early admissions programs. In no state would an early admissions student be counted as a dropout.

Job Corps enrollment. Job Corps is a federally-funded residential training program that is aimed at young people who lack the education and employment skills needed to succeed as adults. Some Job Corps programs offer a secondary education program that is recognized, and may be sponsored, by the state or local school systems. Students transferring to these programs are not considered dropouts. However, other Job Corps programs do not

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[8]It should be noted that the CCD reports GED diploma recipients 19 or younger as school completers. As of September, 1994, the American Council on Education approved pilot projects for administering the GED tests to in-school youth in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and Wisconsin. In all other cases, students must withdraw from school before they can take the GED tests.

offer a recognized secondary program, and students leaving high school to enter into this training are considered dropouts.

In 11 states (22%), no Job Corps enrollees are counted as dropouts, regardless of whether a secondary program is offered. All Job Corps students are considered dropouts in 27 states (53 percent of all states). Five coordinators were not aware of any Job Corps sites in their states and considered the question not applicable. Three other states -- Michigan, Mississippi, and Pennsylvania -- make the requested distinction, considering Job Corps transfers as dropouts unless they enter a program known to offer a secondary component. Two respondents were not sure how Job Corps students were treated.

Effects of other program classification. All states report in agreement with the CCD definition when classifying students who are enrolled in secondary alternative programs and those who have achieved early admissions to postsecondary school (not dropouts). The states that do not count students in adult education GED programs as dropouts would have lower dropout rates than those states that comply with the CCD standard. On the other hand, the states that count students in secondary GED programs as dropouts would expect higher dropout rates than other states.

The effect is less clear with Job Corps enrollments. States that do not count Job Corps trainees as dropouts would in theory have lower rates than states that do. However, if a Job Corps program includes a state- or district-recognized secondary component, participating students should not be considered dropouts.

Twelfth Grade Leavers

It is possible for a student to complete grade 12 without meeting the requirements for a high school diploma. This can happen, for example, if the student does not pass a mandatory proficiency examination. A student who leaves school under this condition should be counted as a dropout. The CCD dropout instructions did not give specific directions for this situation, so state coordinators were asked:

> *How do you classify students who complete the 12th grade and who leave school without receiving a diploma? As dropouts or completers?*

In 17 states the respondent said this situation could not occur, and the question was not applicable. Twenty states (39%) said these students would be counted as dropouts, and eight states (16%) would count them as completers.[9] Louisiana and Texas were not yet able to say how such students would be reported. The decision is made by the local school district in Michigan, and in North Dakota the determination rests on local option decisions about the number of credits required for graduation.

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[9]Some states offer an alternative credential, not a regular diploma, to students completing the course work required for a diploma, but who do not meet other requirements.

Effect of 12th grade leavers. States that do not have high school diploma requirements beyond completing grade 12 would logically have fewer dropouts than states that do impose extra conditions. The same is true for states that count such 12th grade leavers as completers, rather than dropouts. However, it is not anticipated that the numbers of these 12th grade leavers would be very large.

Variations in Reporting Schedules

States were asked, under the CCD dropout definition, to follow an October 1 -- September 30 reporting year, and to count as a dropout any student who was not enrolled on October 1. Variations in how these data collection requirements were followed could lead to differences in the numbers of dropouts reported in two ways: whether the October 1 cut-off date was used, and whether school districts had the opportunity to correct their "as of October 1" numbers. The information in table 3 shows that there was considerable variation across states.

Cut-off date. The CCD definition required that each school district determine on October 1 the dropout or other status of each student enrolled in the previous school year. State dropout contacts were asked:

> *The CCD set October 1, 1992 as the cut-off date for deciding whether a student who had been enrolled in 1991-92 was a dropout. Did you use October 1 or some other date as a cut-off? (Specify.)*

Any state that reported a cut-off date between September 24 and October 8, a week's latitude around the CCD standard, was considered to be in agreement with the CCD's prescribed October 1 date. This included specific calendar dates (example, October 1) and dates that would have to fall within the range (example, first Tuesday in October). There were 19 states that fell into this category, or 37 percent of the total.

Eleven states (22%) collected dropout counts as of the end of the school year. And, each of these 11 counted students who were not enrolled at the end of the year as dropouts, regardless of whether the students re-enrolled in the following autumn. The practice in these states confounded two different reporting discrepancies. Summer dropouts were given the entirety of the school year to enroll, while regular year dropouts who returned the next October 1 were not removed from the dropout count. The states following this practice were Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, New Jersey, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Wisconsin and Wyoming.

An additional 13 states had a specific cut-off date that did, or could, fall outside the two-week range around October 1. These dates ranged from as early as September 10 (North Dakota) to as late as December 1 (Nevada). It is impossible to determine which states use a cut-off before October 1, and which use a later date, since many states set the cut-off as a given number of days after the start of school, which can vary by district. However, on the arbitrary assumption that school begins September 1, the following states would have cut-off

dates earlier than the CCD requirement: Florida, Hawaii, Minnesota, North Carolina, and North Dakota. Those whose cut-off date does (or could) fall after October 1 include Arkansas, California, the District of Columbia, Nevada, Ohio, South Carolina, Texas, and Virginia.

Four states did not fall into any of these categories. The cut-off date varied by school district in Alabama, Kansas and Pennsylvania (which has established a standard cut-off date as of the 1993-94 school year). In West Virginia, dropout counts are collected and amended each month, with students who are not enrolled at the end of the year considered to be dropouts.

Enforcement of cut-off dates. The date on which enrollment requirements are enforced is the final determinant of the cut-off date's impact on data comparability. Forty-six states answered the question:

> *Was a dropout's status changed if you determined that he or she had actually enrolled shortly (say, within two weeks) after?*

Of the 46 states that answered, 25 said that late enrollees were not permitted to be removed from the dropout roster (49 percent of all states) and 16 responded that late enrollees would be removed from the dropout count (31%). An additional five states described practices that would have the same effect as varying the cut-off date. Iowa does not have a fixed dropout date, South Dakota and Wyoming collect counts at the end of the year, and in West Virginia, dropout status is updated monthly. The Texas respondent believed the practice varied by district.

Effects of cut-off dates and enforcement. It is impossible to quantify what effect variations from the October 1 cut-off date would have in various school districts because the first day of school varies. For example, "the second Monday in September" would be relatively "earlier" for a district opening after Labor Day than one opening in mid-August. However, it seems likely that in 19 states (those who have a late cut-off date or remove late enrollees from the dropout count) the dropout count should be consistently deflated.

End-of-school-year counts produce two kinds of data problems, as noted earlier. For any given year, the practice would reduce the number of summer dropouts, since those re-enrolling after October 1 would not be counted as dropouts. At the same time, the practice would increase the number of regular year dropouts by failing to remove those students who dropped out during the year and re-enrolled by the next October 1. These errors presumably cancel one another out to some extent.

The five states observing a cut-off date earlier than October 1 could have higher numbers of dropouts, if they removed October re-enrollees from their dropout rosters, than states with later cut-off dates. Also, states that enforce their established dropout dates should have higher dropout counts than states that allow some latitude in how the dates are applied. However, dropout counts are generally reported by school districts at the same time as membership counts. This would argue that the membership count that serves as the

denominator for a dropout rate is increased or decreased in the opposite direction from the dropout count itself, increasing the extent to which the dropout rate is distorted.

Schedule for correcting reports. The CCD dropout reports are based on school district reports that identify a student's status as of October 1. However, it can be well after October 1 when a district reports to the state education agency, and even later when the data are reported on the CCD. The schedule inherent in the CCD dropout definition assumes that corrections can be made if, for example, a district later learns that a student whose status was unknown on October 1 had actually transferred to another school system.

To find out if such corrections were possible, dropout contacts were asked:

> *If you did use a cut-off date (for deciding whether a student was a dropout), did you literally freeze your records on that day, or continue to accept corrections?*

Only eight state contacts said that records were "frozen" and could not be corrected (Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, and South Carolina). Other states had a range of practices. Some simply kept their records open until data were published, while several had formal public review procedures before a file was closed. When respondents commented on this question, they generally noted that school district corrections had been few.

Summary: Effects of 1991-92 Variations

The interviews discussed above were intended to determine the extent to which states adhered to a standard CCD-sponsored definition and set of collection procedures in reporting dropouts. Since the standard definition was promoted to bring about comparable dropout statistics, discrepancies that inflated or deflated a state's dropout count relative to the CCD standards are critical. The effects of the reported variations are summarized in table 4.

Overall, the 1991-92 dropout counts reported on the 1992-93 CCD show considerable variation in how states applied the definition and collection procedures of the CCD. Two states could have increased their counts, compared to those following the CCD procedures, by failing to remove from the dropout rolls those students who returned before the end of the 1991-92 school year. Some 23 states would have inflated their dropout reports by failing to remove those who had re-enrolled by October 1, 1992. And, two states increased their numbers of dropouts by counting transfers to secondary GED programs as dropouts.

Counting pupils who moved to adult education GED programs would have reduced the number of dropouts reported, and this was the case in 10 states. Nineteen states decreased their counts by removing students who re-enrolled after October 1 from the dropout report.

Setting or enforcing a cut-off date other than October 1 could have increased the number of dropouts in two states that set a date earlier than October 1 and did not permit late enrollments. It is difficult to interpret the outcome among states that followed a July -- June

Table 4.--Effect of state reporting variations on dropout count when compared to CCD standards: 1991-92 school year (all states)

State	End of year returnees	Next year returnees	Enrollment cut-off date	Enrollment date enforcement	Adult GED	Secondary GED	Twelfth grade leavers
Alabama							
Alaska		+	v	-			
Arizona							
Arkansas							
California			-		?		
			-	-	-		
Colorado							
Connecticut		+	v				
Delaware					?		-
District of Columbia		+				+	
Florida			-		?		
		+	+	-	-		
Georgia					-		
Hawaii							
Idaho			+	+			
Illinois		+		-	-		-
Indiana		+	v	-			
	+	+					
Iowa							
Kansas		+	v	?			
Kentucky	v	+	v	-			-
Louisiana			--	--			
Maine		+			-		
		+		-	-		?
Maryland							
Massachusetts		+		-			
Michigan							
Minnesota							
Mississippi		+	+	-	-		v
						+	
Missouri							
Montana							
Nebraska	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Nevada				-			
New Hampshire			-				
	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
New Jersey							
New Mexico		+	v	-			
New York							
North Carolina					?		-
North Dakota			+	+	?		
			+	?			-
Ohio							v
Oklahoma		+	-				
Oregon		+	v	-			
Pennsylvania							-
Rhode Island			v	-			
					v		
South Carolina							-
South Dakota			-	-	-		
Tennessee		+	v	-			-
Texas		+	v	-			
Utah			-	v			
		+	v	-			?
Vermont							
Virginia		+	v				
Washington		v	-		-		
West Virginia	--	--	--	--			
Wisconsin		+	v	?	--	--	--
Wyoming		+	v	-	-		
		+	v	-			

SUMMARY--Effect on count relative to CCD standards:

Increase (+)	1	23	6	2	0	2	0
Decrease (-)	0	0	8	19	10	0	8
Varies, unknown	1	1	15	4	6	0	4

+ Practice produces more dropouts than CCD standard
- Practice produces fewer dropouts than CCD standard
v Effect of practice varies
? Effect unknown
-- Not reported

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data - Data Plan Supplements.

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reporting schedule, because this practice would have had differential effects on the numbers of regular year and summer dropouts.

Of the 13 states with state dropout definitions that differ from the CCD, three (Florida, Massachusetts and Mississippi) consciously provide different reports for state and CCD uses (see table 1). In two of the states (Colorado and Massachusetts) the practices in place logically would result in state dropout counts or rates greater than those on the CCD. In Florida, Mississippi and Oklahoma the state reports logically would have lower numbers and rates than the CCD, while Arizona's inflated denominator would not affect counts but would lower rates. The direction of the difference is not clear for Alaska, Idaho, Rhode Island, South Carolina, or Virginia.

While it is possible to identify aspects in which state dropout reports differ from one another, it is not equally clear what the quantitative effect of these differences are on dropout counts. Anecdotal reports from states suggest that the greatest threat to comparability is whether students who re-enroll by October 1 of the year after which they have left school are considered dropouts. (Failing to remove from dropout counts those who return by the end of the school year is even more biasing, but limited to one or two states.) The decisions about how to classify returning students tend to be basic components of the state's dropout reporting system. In order to comply with the CCD requirement, non-standard states would have to make systemic changes.

Attributing summer dropouts to the wrong school year and grade is another variation whose correction would require major changes in dropout reporting systems. Misclassifying these dropouts may not distort the overall dropout count, but it can bias grade-by-grade dropout rates.

Other sources of bias are more "superficial" in that they could probably be addressed by amending current reporting systems. These corrections include counting adult education GED program participants as dropouts, changing the cut-off date to October 1 (or adjusting current reports to reflect that date), and enforcing the established cut-off date.

PART 2. FOLLOW-UP SURVEY ON PLANS TO CHANGE

1992-93 was the first year in which states reported dropouts on the CCD, and the collection included a major change (the year to which summer dropouts were attributed) from the version that had been field tested. In early April, 1994, NCES wrote to 40 states that had one or more serious differences from the CCD, asking the state to confirm this difference and indicate when it could be corrected. The "serious" differences were failure to remove end-of-year or October 1 returnees from the dropout count; misclassification of adult education or secondary GED program participants; and not enforcing an October 1 cut-off date in deciding whether a student was to be reported as a dropout. (Coordinators were not asked about attributing promoted summer dropouts to the wrong grade, which was later judged to be a serious data problem.) Thirty-nine states had answered by mid-October, and their responses are shown in table 5.

Categorizing Re-enrolling Students

In reporting 1991-92 dropouts, two states did not remove from their dropout rolls students who dropped out in 1991-92, but returned before the end of the school year. Kansas said it was corrected as of the 1992-93 school year, and Indiana said that while there were no plans to change this practice, the state would discuss the possibility.

Twenty-three states counted 1991-92 dropouts who were enrolled on October 1, 1992 as dropouts. Five states have corrected this, or will do so within two years: Delaware, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine and West Virginia. Ten states can, or may consider ways to, change their data collection. These states are Colorado, Indiana, Iowa, Minnesota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. The conditions affecting a possible change that these state respondents brought up included long-range changes to state legislation or board policy, adding a report item that would have district surveys "back out" October returnees, or waiting for NCES to settle on a standard definition and procedures.

Six respondents said that their states had no plans to change dropout collection practices, generally because they did not have the means to identify returning students from one school year to the next, because their practices were set in state law, or they simply did not feel motivated to do so. These states were Florida, Idaho, Illinois, Maryland, New Jersey, and Tennessee. It appears that Florida has the capability, through its student record system, to remove October 1 returning students from CCD dropout reports if the state chooses. Virginia intends to maintain its practice of removing only those returning dropouts who have completed their missed school work in summer school. Alabama and Ohio did not respond to the letter.

Arizona, which appeared to agree with the CCD in 1992-93, wrote NCES stating that in the future the state would count October 1 returnees as dropouts.

Table 5.--States plans to change nonstandard CCD dropout reporting practices (all states)

State	June recapture	October recapture	Adult GED	Other problems
Alabama		no response		
Arizona		will break out		
Arkansas			track students	
California			unresolved	
Colorado		perhaps; if NCES sets firm practice	track students	keep end of year count
Connecticut			working on change	secondary GED - drop - working to correct
Delaware		fixed - 1992-93	track students	
District Columbia			can report adult GEDs separately	keep October 17 count
Florida		no plan to change	no plan to change	no plans to change - late no shows aren't dropouts
Hawaii			will fix	keep early September count
Idaho		no plan to change		
Illinois		no plan to change		
Indiana	possibly change- not planned	possibly change - not planned		
Iowa		legislated but may consider law change to Oct 1		
Kansas	fix 1992-93 (1993- 94 reports)	fix 1992-93 (1993-94 reports)		
Kentucky			no response	summer dropouts in state board regulation may change, no plans
Louisiana		fix by 1993-94	no change - Board requirement	
Maine		fix 1994-95		fix; enforce date by 1994-95
Maryland		no plan to change		no change- late returnees not drops
Michigan			could partition out alternative progs.	
Minnesota		could fix by 1994-95		
Mississippi				Secondary GED - count as drops
Nebraska				keep end of Sep cut off date
Nevada				late cut-off, no response
New Jersey		no plan to change		no change - keep late enrollment

Table 5.--States plans to change nonstandard CCD dropout reporting practices (all states) - Continued

State	June recapture	October recapture	Adult GED	Other problems
New York			track students	
North Carolina			track students	keep "20th day" report date
Ohio		no response		
Oklahoma		may consider change		
Pennsylvania				enforce Oct 1 cut-off for 1992-93 data
Rhode Island			will vary by LEA	
South Carolina			will track as of 1994-95	board voted to follow CCD - but keep "46th day" report date
South Dakota		no change until NCES adopts standard		will allow full year to re-enroll
Tennessee		no plan to change		no change- keep late enrollees
Texas				will keep Oct 31 reporting date
Utah		considering change to Oct 1, 1994-95		
Vermont		considering change no date	may attempt to track	
Virginia		no change - drop status changed if completes courses		
West Virginia		fix by 1994-95 (1995-96 report)	fix by 1994-95	
Wisconsin		will explore ways to back out Oct 1 returnees, 1994-95		
Wyoming		no plans - but under review. earliest, 1995		no plans to change late count

June recapture: State will remove students who return before the end of their school year from the dropout count.

October recapture: State will remove students who return before the end of their school year from the dropout count by October 1 of the following year from the dropout count.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data - Data Plan Supplements.

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GED Program Enrollees

Of the two states that counted secondary program GED students as dropouts, Connecticut is working with its school districts to correct this practice, and it is not known what Mississippi intends to do.

Ten states did not count adult education GED students as dropouts in 1991-92. Of these, six states believe that they can change this practice or somehow identify such transfers and report them as dropouts: the District of Columbia, Hawaii, Minnesota, South Carolina, Vermont, and West Virginia. Florida and Louisiana do not intend to change their reporting practices. The issue is unresolved in California, and it is not known what Kentucky intends to do.

Enforcing Cut-off Dates

The question of whether to remove a late returner (a student enrolling after October 1) from the dropout rolls is confounded with the question of whether a state follows the October 1 reporting date, particularly whether it follows a July-June or October-September reporting year.

In general, the states that collect dropout counts at the end of the school year will continue to disagree with CCD reporting practices in two major ways. First, these states will allow students who *completed* the previous school year to enroll after October 1 without being counted as dropouts. Second, these states will consider students who *did not complete* the previous school year, but who are enrolled on October 1 of the current school year, as dropouts for the previous school year. States are also unwilling to change reporting dates at the beginning of the school year to conform with the October 1 requirement. Some echo the argument made by South Carolina, that reporting on the 46th day of the school year is actually more uniform than setting a calendar date, because districts vary in when they open schools. Others argue that their collection date is set by law or board policy, or that the date is used for a number of other statistics, and that change would be difficult (and of questionable value).

Summary of Possible Changes

Under the most optimistic assumptions, the CCD dropout statistic would be fairly consistent across states by the 1994-95 reporting year. All but two states (Montana and New Hampshire) would be reporting an annual dropout count by that time, and all but three of the reporting 49 would report dropouts broken out by sex and racial/ethnic status.

All reporting states would remove students from their dropout counts if these school leavers re-enrolled by the end of the year in which they dropped out. Only seven states would fail to remove from their reports dropouts who re-enrolled by October 1 of the following school year. The number of these states possibly could be reduced by the growth of individual student record systems that would make it possible to track students across school years and school districts.

A more pessimistic evaluation would still have 48 states reporting in the near future, with 47 of them providing the full detail requested. However, two states would still count end-of-year returnees as dropouts and 18 would fail to remove October 1 returnees from their dropout reports (the optimistic assessment above assumes that 11 of these 18 could make such a change). One state would consider secondary program GED students as dropouts, while six states would not consider students in adult education GED classes to be dropouts.

Part 3. Analysis of 1991-92 Dropout Data

Although the dropout counts from the 43 states reporting district-level data for the 1991-92 school year did not consistently follow CCD standards, the information collected in this first year is useful. This section explores the completeness of reporting from participating states and the differences between adjusted and unadjusted dropout rates. A brief discussion of the numbers and types of dropouts reported for 1991-92 concludes the section.

Standard and Nonstandard Data

The dropout data reported on the 1992-93 CCD Agency Universe for school year 1991-92 should have included two types of dropouts:

- Regular year dropouts, who were enrolled in 1991-92, dropped out during that year, and were not enrolled on October 1, 1992; and
- Summer dropouts, who completed the 1990-91 school year but were not enrolled on October 1, 1991.

Twenty-four states incorrectly counted as dropouts those students who returned by the end of the 1991-92 school year, students who re-enrolled by October 1, 1992. An additional five states attributed summer dropouts to the wrong year. These were the two departures from the CCD definition judged most likely to have biased the size of the dropout count.[10] Because of this, NCES is publishing dropout counts and rates from only the 14 "standard" states.

A small number of districts reported dropouts, but no students in membership. These districts are omitted from the analyses, where appropriate. This omission accounts for some differences in the total number of districts in some tables.

Computing Dropout Rates

Rates are the proportion of a given group that is dropouts. That is, a dropout rate for grade 8 is the number of grade 8 students dropping out divided by the grade 8 membership. Membership is the count of students on the school's rolls on October 1 of the school year. Unless otherwise noted, rates are based on October 1, 1991-92 membership alone.

Membership is based on the 1991-92 CCD School Universe. The grade-level membership counts used in this analysis were reported on the CCD School Universe survey. District membership counts were calculated by summing membership for the grade(s) of interest across all schools associated with a district. The state membership totals shown in

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[10]These are the major, but not the only, conditions affecting data comparability. Failing to enforce a cut-off date close to October 1, and failing to count adult education GED transfers as dropouts would also bias the total count.

this paper are the sum of the district totals thus computed, and may differ from the numbers in the 1991-92 CCD State Aggregate report.

Ungraded students. The "ungraded" dropouts reported by the District of Columbia were apportioned across grades 7 through 12. For all analyses except those comparing different methods of computing the dropout rate, ungraded students were distributed across the grade 7 through 12 membership counts in all districts reporting ungraded students. The number of ungraded students in each district was prorated across all of the grades in the district on the basis of the number of students in each grade.

Rates. School district dropout rates are the ratios of dropouts to membership for the group of interest (example, grade 9). State dropout rates are based on state totals for dropouts and students in membership, and are not the average of district rates. Similarly, total rates for a group of states are based on the sum of dropouts divided by the sum of membership, not the average of the state rates.

Quality of the 1991-92 Data

The first year's dropout reports provided a valuable opportunity to explore several potential threats to data quality. The first of these was completeness of reporting -- was there internal evidence that school districts were systematically failing to report dropouts? The second issue was the quantitative effect of failing to adhere to the CCD definition.

Comprehensiveness of Reporting

Only school districts enrolling students in one or more of grades 7 through 12 can have dropouts. Across the 42 states and the District of Columbia reporting 1991-92 dropouts at the school district level, a total of 12,109 districts reported students in membership in any of grades 7 through 12 in 1991-92 (table 6). This group included 86 percent of the 14,169 school districts with any pupils in membership in these states during that year. All districts included students in the potential dropout grades in the District of Columbia, Kansas, Maryland and Nevada. The smallest proportions of districts with potential dropouts were found in Vermont (39%), Maine (65%) and Massachusetts (66%).

Districts with no dropouts. A total of 3,259 of the 12,109 districts, or 27 percent, did not report any 1991-92 dropouts. This figure included 3,097 districts reporting "0" dropouts and 162 districts for which no numeric count was given -- the number of dropouts was left blank or somehow coded as missing data. Because the number of districts with missing

Table 6.--Missing (M or 0) dropout counts among districts with any of grades 7–12: 1991–92 school year (45 states reporting district-level dropout data)

	Total districts	Potentially reporting	Non-reporting missing	Non-reporting 0	Nonreporting 0			Districts with any of grades 9–12	Non-reporting 0 or missing
					Regular districts	Grade 7–12 total membership less than 200	High grade 7 or 8		
Total	14,169	12,109	162	3,097	3,009	2,399	2,019	9,802	1,133
Alabama	130	129	0	4	3	0	0	129	4
Arizona	247	203	1	53	53	47	51	103	3
Arkansas	340	322	0	27	26	7	0	320	27
California	1,067	978	0	539	510	350	496	443	41
Colorado	193	179	0	36	35	34	0	179	36
Connecticut	179	154	0	32	32	25	28	125	4
Delaware	22	19	0	0	--	0	0	19	0
District of Columbia	1	1	0	0	--	0	0	1	0
Florida	74	70	0	2	0	2	0	70	2
Idaho	114	113	8	6	6	6	0	106	7
Illinois	1,060	937	0	402	397	261	375	531	27
Indiana	328	301	10	0	--	0	0	300	9
Iowa	471	405	1	77	77	60	38	362	40
Kansas	304	304	0	53	53	38	0	303	53
Louisiana	71	70	4	0	--	0	0	70	4
Maine	327	211	0	103	103	94	91	118	12
Maryland	24	24	0	0	--	0	0	24	0
Massachusetts	433	286	0	42	37	23	31	255	11
Michigan	619	550	26	32	32	17	0	526	34
Minnesota	510	361	0	84	71	58	20	338	64
Mississippi	162	157	0	1	0	0	0	157	1
Missouri	539	536	0	124	124	116	82	450	42
Nebraska	848	555	0	364	351	354	247	308	117
Nevada	18	18	2	0	--	0	0	17	1
New Jersey	620	498	0	247	247	174	208	272	39
New Mexico	96	92	4	13	13	12	0	92	17
North Carolina	135	131	0	2	0	0	0	131	2
North Dakota	317	241	0	166	160	152	40	201	126
Ohio	789	611	0	14	14	4	0	610	14
Oklahoma	568	558	0	168	168	163	114	437	54
Oregon	306	272	2	97	97	94	80	181	18
Pennsylvania	613	513	13	7	7	2	2	511	18
Rhode Island	37	35	0	2	2	2	2	33	0
South Carolina	106	94	3	0	--	0	0	93	2
South Dakota	218	187	0	68	59	62	10	173	58
Tennessee	140	132	0	8	8	4	6	123	2
Texas	1,048	1,024	0	202	202	169	51	972	151
Utah	47	40	0	4	4	2	0	40	4
Vermont	345	134	74	1	1	1	0	65	6
Virginia	161	133	3	0	--	0	0	131	1
West Virginia	57	56	1	0	--	0	0	56	1
Wisconsin	427	426	10	111	111	60	44	380	76
Wyoming	58	49	0	6	6	6	1	47	5

-- Not applicable.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data.

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dropout counts was considerably smaller than the number for which "0" dropouts were reported, more attention was paid to these zero-dropout districts.

Districts reporting 0 dropouts. It is possible that dropout codes of "M" for districts that are unlikely to serve students directly reflect a reporting problem rather than truly missing data. However, reports of 0 dropouts for regular school districts are positive statements that students were served, and none dropped out.

Thirty-one of the states reporting dropouts in 1991-92 had one or more regular school districts that reported "0" dropouts. This ranged from a single regular school district in Vermont to more than half of the regular districts with grade 7-12 students in California, Nebraska, and North Dakota.

Three plausible reasons for a district to report 0 dropouts could be explored readily through other information on the CCD. These were school district type, size, and the grades served (table 6).

School district type. Some types of school districts, such as supervisory unions and regional service agencies, are unlikely to provide direct services to students but may report membership figures on the CCD that reflect students under their aegis who are served by some other agency. Other types of agencies, such as state-operated residential schools, may be unlikely to have students dropping out of school. Most of the districts reporting "0" dropouts were regular school districts; table 6 shows that 3,009 of the 3,097 districts with 0 dropouts were in this category.[11] However, none of the school districts with no dropouts in Florida, Mississippi and North Carolina were regular school districts.

District size and dropouts. Small districts would be less likely to have dropouts than larger districts. Some 2,399 of the 3,097 districts (77%) reporting no dropouts had a cumulative membership of fewer than 200 students across grades 7 through 12. All of the districts with no dropouts fell into this small size category in Florida, Idaho, Rhode Island, Vermont and Wyoming. The greatest numbers of these small districts were found in California (350 of the 539 districts), Illinois (261 of 402), Nebraska (354 of 364), New Jersey (174 of 247), North Dakota (152 of 166), Oklahoma (163 of 168), and Texas (169 of 202).

Grade span and dropouts. Table 6 shows that a total of 2,019 districts reporting no dropouts (65%) ended with grade 7 or 8. More than half the districts reporting no dropouts were in this category in Arizona, California, Connecticut, Illinois, Maine, Massachusetts, Missouri, Nebraska, New Jersey, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, and Tennessee.

Idaho, Michigan and Nevada had reported that they excluded dropouts for grades 7 and 8 from the CCD. Among states that did not explicitly exclude grade 7 and 8 dropouts, the lack of dropouts from districts ending in these grades could have been related to one of two reasons. The first is that dropout rates are much lower in grades 7 and 8, in which students are likely to be younger than the age at which state law allows them to leave school.

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[11]This includes the CCD categories of Type 1 (local school district) and Type 2 (local school district component of a supervisory union).

The second possible cause is that districts may not have reported these younger school leavers as dropouts, considering them instead as truancy problems even in states that do not mandate this classification. Regardless of whether these -- or other -- factors were in operation, the analysis suggests that any under-reporting that took place was most likely to have biased the statistics for grades 7 and 8.

Completeness of grade 9-12 data. The most familiar event dropout rate is that which includes grades 9 through 12, the high school years. As table 6 illustrates, there were 9,802 districts that included any of these grades. Of these, 1,133 (12%) reported no dropouts. The number of grade 9-12 districts reporting 0 dropouts reported ranged from no cases in Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Rhode Island to more than 100 districts in Nebraska, North Dakota, and Texas.

Effects of Summer and October 1 Misallocations

Dropout data were not considered acceptable if states allocated summer dropouts to the wrong school year and grade, or retained October 1 returnees ("recaptured" students) in the dropout count. Although the 1991-92 dropout collection did not collect information to test the effects of these discrepancies, the 1989 field test of the dropout collection had collected separate counts of regular year and summer dropouts. This gave grade specific estimates of the proportion of dropouts who left during the summer.

Misallocating summer dropouts. The field test did not use a representative sample of school districts, but its findings can give a rough idea of how much dropout rates could be distorted by attributing summer dropouts to the wrong grade. The estimates shown below are based on the 1991-92 dropout rates for the 14 states that reported acceptable dropout data. Remember that if summer dropouts were attributed to the wrong year, only those who were promoted and failed to re-enroll would be attributed to the wrong grade: a student who did not return after failing the ninth grade in 1991-92 would still be counted as a ninth grade dropout, albeit for the wrong year. When dropouts are attributed to the wrong grade, the appropriate grade loses a portion of its summer dropouts to the previous grade and picks up a portion of the summer dropouts from the next grade. Using the field test findings on the proportion of dropouts who left in the summer, the estimates show what would happen if 100 percent or 50 percent of the summer dropouts were accounted to the prior grade.[12]

[12]See Appendix C for calculations of the effects of misallocating summer dropouts and October recaptures. The denominators for these calculations did not include ungraded students, and may therefore differ slightly from rates shown elsewhere.

Table 7.--Effect of attributing 0, 50 or 100 percent of summer dropouts to the wrong grade

Dropout rate by grade	Summer dropouts attributed to prior grade:		
	None	50 percent	100 percent
Grade 7	.011	.011	.011
Grade 8	.015	.017	.021
Grade 9	.048	.046	.045
Grade 10	.058	.058	.057
Grade 11	.058	.061	.063
Grade 12	.051	.045	.040

Failing to recapture October 1 returnees. Anecdotal reports from some states and school districts suggested that up to 25 percent of the students leaving school during the regular school year re-enroll in the subsequent fall. This proportion was used to estimate the effects of failing to remove October 1 re-enrollees from the dropout count. To estimate the effect of counting October 1 returnees as dropouts, the expected proportion of regular year dropouts (that is, excluding the estimated summer dropouts) was divided by 0.75 for each grade. The figures shown below are again based on 1991-92 dropout rates among properly reporting states, without prorating ungraded membership, and inflate the proportion of regular school year dropouts.

Table 8.--Effect of failing to remove October recaptures (estimated at 25 percent) from dropout count

Dropout rate by grade:	October 1 returners counted as dropouts:	
	None	25 percent
Grade 7	.011	.013
Grade 8	.015	.018
Grade 9	.048	.060
Grade 10	.058	.075
Grade 11	.058	.075
Grade 12	.051	.064

Adjusted and Unadjusted Rates

A dropout rate based on a single October 1 membership report does not take into account the fact that students can move from school to school during the year. Dropouts are attributed to the last school district in which they were enrolled, which may not be the school

district in whose membership count (and dropout denominator) they appear. A technically perfect dropout rate would report both dropouts and students in membership in something like "full time equivalents" -- with a student who enrolls in mid-year counting as one-half of a student in the district's membership, and a dropout who spent three months in one district and six months in another shown as one-third and two-thirds of a dropout in the respective districts.

This degree of precision is beyond the scope of the CCD. NCES proposed an alternate rate, however, that adjusted somewhat for net loss or gain in student membership through transfers into or out of the district. This rate was based on the average of membership across two grades from one year to the next. In a sense, the rate treated a grade as a cohort of students over time, averaging the grade 7 membership in October 1991 with grade 8 membership in 1992. This "adjusted" rate would not be as accurate as one apportioning students and dropouts over all of the districts in which they enrolled, but it was feasible to implement with CCD data.[13]

The major problem in using the adjusted rate is the requirement that the district include both the grade of interest and the subsequent grade. For example,in a district ending with grade 8 it is possible to calculate an adjusted rate for grade 7, but not for grade 8. Grade 12, in the absence of additional information, must rely on an estimate to produce the adjusted rate since it is not known how many of last year's grade 12 students are repeating the grade this year, and should logically be added to the number of graduates to create the "next year" membership for grade 12.

Because there was an anticipated trade-off between the added precision and the logistical difficulties in using the adjusted dropout rate, it was compared with the unadjusted rate (that is, based on a single October 1 membership count) in this first year of the dropout collection. All 43 states reporting district level data were included in these analyses.[14]

Comparing Adjusted and Unadjusted Rates

Table 9 shows the ratio of unadjusted to adjusted dropout rates by state, for all districts and for four categories of grade 9 through 12 membership size in 1991-92. This includes all of the districts with any of grades 9 through 12, and the analysis was limited to grades to these grades because reporting was generally more complete for them.[15] A ratio greater than 1.0 indicates that the unadjusted rate is the larger of the two.

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[13]See Appendix C for more discussion of how rates were calculated.

[14]The differences between standard and nonstandard states were not expected to systematically bias one rate or the other. And, because of time constraints in data processing, the rate comparisons used membership counts that excluded ungraded students.

[15]A total of 8,614 districts included some of grades 9 through 12; 29 of those were excluded from this analysis because they were missing a membership count for 1991-92 or 1992-93.

Table 9.--Number of districts and average ratio of unadjusted to adjusted dropout rates, by membership size category, grades 9–12 combined, in districts with membership: 1991–92 school year (43 states reporting district-level dropout data)

	All districts		District membership range							
			Membership less than 100		Membership 100–499		Membership 500–999		Membership greater than or equal to 1,000	
	Number	Average ratio	Number	Average ratio	Number	Average ratio	Number	Average ratio	Number	Average ratio
Number of districts and average ratio	8,580	1.022	717	1.060	3,825	1.020	1,970	1.017	2,077	1.017
Alabama	124	1.014	--	--	17	1.017	53	1.011	54	1.016
Arizona	100	1.091	6	1.060	42	1.094	22	1.081	30	1.102
Arkansas	291	1.096	62	1.322	178	1.042	29	1.014	22	0.994
California	401	1.008	16	1.049	68	1.004	74	1.016	243	1.003
Colorado	140	1.032	33	1.057	63	1.020	17	1.022	27	1.035
Connecticut	121	1.029	2	1.492	34	1.034	49	1.018	36	1.023
Delaware	19	1.004	--	--	2	0.990	9	1.002	8	1.009
District of Columbia	1	1.062	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	1.062
Florida	67	0.995	--	--	7	0.987	10	0.985	50	0.999
Idaho	99	1.06	19	1.040	45	1.053	19	1.059	16	1.104
Illinois	503	1.025	33	1.043	291	1.019	78	1.025	101	1.033
Indiana	291	1.021	--	--	127	1.019	95	1.024	69	1.021
Iowa	317	1.023	18	1.031	248	1.021	29	1.022	22	1.034
Kansas	249	1.024	42	1.020	159	1.021	29	1.036	19	1.040
Louisiana	66	0.975	--	--	4	0.965	16	0.973	46	0.977
Maine	105	1.01	3	1.017	57	1.007	39	1.013	6	1.025
Maryland	24	1.021	--	--	--	--	2	1.022	22	1.020
Massachusetts	244	1.008	--	--	72	1.009	108	1.007	64	1.010
Michigan	492	1.02	11	1.062	224	1.020	154	1.021	103	1.013
Minnesota	262	1.036	15	1.111	160	1.030	43	1.026	44	1.044
Mississippi	155	1.006	2	1.041	55	1.012	59	1.001	39	1.003
Missouri	406	1.03	65	1.020	231	1.028	57	1.038	52	1.040
Nebraska	191	1.025	69	1.027	97	1.022	14	1.033	11	1.026
Nevada	16	1.051	1	1.112	6	1.043	3	1.045	6	1.052
New Jersey	229	1.019	--	--	48	1.022	91	1.021	90	1.017
New Mexico	75	1.042	12	1.015	30	1.049	14	1.039	19	1.049
North Carolina	129	1.007	--	--	11	1.000	32	0.995	86	1.013
North Dakota	74	1.028	31	1.044	33	1.018	4	1.011	6	1.015
Ohio	591	1.019	2	1.026	270	1.018	195	1.017	124	1.024
Oklahoma	371	1.029	92	1.046	222	1.024	31	1.022	26	1.020
Oregon	160	1.034	21	1.025	68	1.026	32	1.040	39	1.049
Pennsylvania	493	1.01	1	0.993	160	1.009	210	1.008	122	1.012
Rhode Island	32	1.018	1	1.047	3	0.997	18	1.018	10	1.021
South Carolina	91	0.978	--	--	21	0.985	23	0.972	47	0.977
South Dakota	106	1.019	40	1.022	53	1.020	9	1.022	4	0.985
Tennessee	119	1.032	--	--	23	1.020	31	1.026	65	1.040
Texas	812	1.004	104	1.018	412	1.003	124	1.005	172	0.998
Utah	36	1.016	--	--	8	1.010	6	1.016	22	1.019
Vermont	59	1.025	5	1.029	36	1.020	15	1.031	3	1.046
Virginia	130	1.022	--	--	31	1.031	35	1.016	64	1.021
West Virginia	55	1.016	--	--	9	1.017	14	1.017	32	1.015
Wisconsin	302	1.013	10	1.025	176	1.011	68	1.012	48	1.016
Wyoming	42	1.045	1	1.070	24	1.044	10	1.043	7	1.048

-- Data not available.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data.

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In theory, the unadjusted rate should be smaller than the adjusted rate (a ratio of less than 1.0) in states that experienced a net gain in students between 1991 and 1992. In actuality, ratios of less than 1.0 predominated in only three states: Florida, Louisiana, and South Carolina.

Across all districts and states, the unadjusted rate produced dropout rates about 0.02 higher than the adjusted rate. Put into percentages, an adjusted dropout rate of 5.0 percent would be matched by an unadjusted rate of 5.1 percent. However, the difference is higher in the smallest school districts, where the unadjusted rate may be almost half again (Connecticut) or one-third again (Arkansas) the size of the adjusted rate. Some reasons for this are that percentages in very small districts can be greatly influenced by changes of only a few students, while some districts may have reconfigured their grade distributions between 1991 and 1992. It appears also that some districts represented alternative programs for students at risk of dropping from school, with open enrollment practices that make an October 1 membership count almost meaningless.

Districts with rate differences. If the overall differences between the two methods of calculating dropout rate were small, there could still be substantial numbers of individual districts for which the methods produced greatly disparate rates. Table 10 outlines the extent of difference between the two rates (adjusted and nonadjusted for grades 9-12), by state. The table shows the number of districts in each state for which the absolute difference between the two rates was 0.005. A difference of 0.005 (3.1 percent versus 3.6 or 2.6 percent, for example) was considered questionably large.

A total of 8,648 districts including all of grades 9-12 reported one or more dropouts. Among these, 569 districts (7%) had differences of 0.005 or more between the adjusted and unadjusted rates. (None of these had a difference as great as .01.) In all but 14 cases, the unadjusted rate was larger. The only states without any districts exhibiting a difference of .05 or more between the two rates were Delaware, Louisiana, Utah and West Virginia.

A sample of the districts with differences of .005 or more between the adjusted and unadjusted rates were examined, and all appeared to fall within one of several conditions. In the first condition, the unadjusted rate was higher than the adjusted rate when a large proportion of students (10 percent or more) dropped out. For example, "District A" reported 55 dropouts from grades 9 through 12 in 1991-92; a 1991-92 membership of 274 students, and a 1992-93 membership of 243. The second condition was that in which a district's membership size changed considerably. In "District B" the membership declined from 902 to 24 students across those two years. It is not possible to determine from the data which districts show reporting errors. However, some district names suggest that they are alternative education agencies, for which high dropout rates and varying year-to-year enrollments could be expected.

Districts with High Grade Below 12

Of the 12,109 districts including any of grades 7 through 12, a total of 2,350 (19%) ended in some grade below 12. The greatest number of such districts ended in grade 8. As table 11 shows, it would not be possible to compute an adjusted dropout rate for grade 7 in

Table 10.--Number of districts including grades 9–12 with absolute difference of 0.005 or greater between adjusted and unadjusted dropout rates: 1991–92 school year (43 states reporting district-level dropout data)

	Rate difference is 0.005 to 0.009	
	Unadjusted 0.005 and greater than adjusted	Unadjusted 0.005 and less than adjusted
Total	219	2
Alabama	0	0
Arizona	31	0
Arkansas	59	0
California	11	2
Colorado	5	0
Connecticut	3	0
Delaware	0	0
District of Columbia	0	0
Florida	0	0
Idaho	16	0
Illinois	4	0
Indiana	0	0
Iowa	2	0
Kansas	2	0
Louisiana	0	0
Maine	0	0
Maryland	1	0
Massachusetts	1	0
Michigan	15	0
Minnesota	4	0
Mississippi	1	0
Missouri	4	0
Nebraska	3	0
Nevada	0	0
New Jersey	7	0
New Mexico	8	0
North Carolina	2	0
North Dakota	5	0
Ohio	3	0
Oklahoma	12	0
Oregon	3	0
Pennsylvania	1	0
Rhode Island	3	0
South Carolina	0	0
South Dakota	2	0
Tennessee	3	0
Texas	6	0
Utah	0	0
Vermont	0	0
Virginia	0	0
West Virginia	0	0
Wisconsin	1	0
Wyoming	1	0

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data.

Table 11.--Number of districts including any of grades 7–12 by highest grade for which membership is reported: 1991–92 school year (43 states reporting district-level dropout data)

	Number of districts						
	Total	High grade 7	High grade 8	High grade 9	High grade 10	High grade 11	High grade 12
Total	12,019	96	2,211	22	6	15	9,759
Alabama	129	0	0	0	0	0	129
Arizona	203	0	100	2	0	0	101
Arkansas	322	0	2	0	0	1	319
California	978	8	527	0	2	5	436
Colorado	179	0	0	0	0	0	179
Connecticut	154	0	29	1	0	0	124
Delaware	19	0	0	0	0	0	19
District of Columbia	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Florida	70	0	0	0	0	0	70
Idaho	113	2	5	0	0	0	106
Illinois	937	0	406	0	1	0	530
Indiana	301	0	1	0	0	2	298
Iowa	405	0	43	0	0	0	362
Kansas	304	0	1	1	0	0	302
Louisiana	70	0	0	0	0	0	70
Maine	211	4	89	1	0	0	117
Maryland	24	0	0	0	0	0	24
Massachusetts	286	0	31	0	0	0	255
Michigan	550	4	20	0	0	1	525
Minnesota	361	0	23	8	1	1	328
Mississippi	157	0	0	1	0	0	156
Missouri	536	0	86	0	0	1	449
Nebraska	555	62	185	0	0	2	306
Nevada	18	0	1	0	0	0	17
New Jersey	498	0	226	1	1	0	270
New Mexico	92	0	0	0	0	0	92
North Carolina	131	0	0	0	0	0	131
North Dakota	241	6	34	0	0	0	201
Ohio	611	1	0	0	0	0	610
Oklahoma	558	1	120	2	0	0	435
Oregon	272	4	87	0	1	0	180
Pennsylvania	513	1	1	0	0	0	511
Rhode Island	35	0	2	0	0	0	33
South Carolina	94	0	1	0	0	0	93
South Dakota	187	1	13	0	0	0	173
Tennessee	132	0	9	4	0	0	119
Texas	1024	0	52	1	0	2	969
Utah	40	0	0	0	0	0	40
Vermont	134	1	68	0	0	0	65
Virginia	133	1	1	0	0	0	131
West Virginia	56	0	0	0	0	0	56
Wisconsin	426	0	46	0	0	0	380
Wyoming	49	0	2	0	0	0	47

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data.

96 districts; for grade 8 in 2,211 districts; grade 9 in 22 districts; grade 10 in 6 districts; and grade 11 in 15 districts. Relatively few students drop out of grades 7 and 8, so these conditions would not limit the use of the adjusted dropout rate as much as the numbers imply. However, the difficulties are not evenly distributed across states: in Arizona, California, Illinois, Maine, New Jersey, and Vermont almost half of the school districts would not be able to use an adjusted dropout rate for every grade.

PART 4. 1991-92 SCHOOL YEAR DROPOUTS

Table 12 reports the number and unadjusted rates of dropouts for the 1991-92 school year. Across the 14 states that treated October 1 returnees and summer dropouts in agreement with the CCD standard, a total of 216,400 students dropped out of grades 9 through 12. The highest dropout rates across the high school grades were in Arizona (11.1%) and the District of Columbia (11.5%), while the lowest rates were in Massachusetts (3.2%) and Pennsylvania (3.7%).

Dropout rates varied by grade. The lowest rate was in grade 7 (less than 1 percent in 8 of the 14 states), increasing somewhat in grade 8 (6 states with rates below 1 percent) and climbing in grade 9 (the lowest state rate is 2.3 percent). In grade 10, some 10 states report dropout rates of 5 percent or more. This was true for 11 states in grade 11 and 8 states in grade 12.

Male and female dropouts. Among the 40 states reporting detail about dropouts, 56 percent of the grade 9 through 12 dropouts were male and 44 percent were female (table 13). These proportions were similar across the states with Arkansas as an outlier with 68 percent of its dropouts being male.

Racial/ethnic group rates. Table 13 displays the numbers of students in five racial/ethnic groups dropping out of grades 9 through 12 as a whole. Note that the rates shown are the proportion of dropouts comprised by a single group, *not* the proportion of that group who are dropouts. For example, 0.3 percent of Alabama's grade 9-12 dropouts were American Indians, 0.4 percent were Asian/Pacific Islanders, 61.2 percent were black, not Hispanic, and so on. Within the 40 states providing detail, 1.8 percent of the grade 9-12 dropouts were American Indians or Alaskan natives; 2.4 percent were Asians/Pacific Islanders; 23.8 percent were black, not Hispanic; 21.2 percent were Hispanic; and 50.8 percent were white, not Hispanic.

Table 12.--Numbers of dropouts and unadjusted dropout rates by grade: 1991–92 school year (14 states reporting standard district-level dropout data)

	Grade 7		Grade 8		Grade 9		Grade 10		Grade 11		Grade 12		Grades 9–12	
	Dropout	Ratio	Dropout	Ratio	Dropout	Ratio	Dropout	Ratio	Dropout	Ratio	Dropout	Ratio	Dropout	Ratio
Arizona	1,629	0.0321	1,614	0.0340	5,011	0.1005	4,564	0.1037	4,155	0.1080	4,854	0.1353	18,584	0.1105
Arkansas	311	0.0086	617	0.0177	897	0.0264	1,308	0.0411	1,516	0.0513	1,268	0.0458	4,989	0.0406
California	4,654	0.0124	5,550	0.0154	16,714	0.0410	22,007	0.0580	18,534	0.0559	15,637	0.0587	72,892	0.0527
District of Columbia	246	0.0432	222	0.0423	495	0.0949	733	0.1275	549	0.1267	400	0.1110	2,177	0.1152
Massachusetts	110	0.0018	203	0.0034	1,933	0.0305	2,192	0.0371	2,111	0.0376	1,282	0.0238	7,518	0.0323
Mississippi	689	0.0163	766	0.0198	2,177	0.0533	2,029	0.0595	1,645	0.0547	1,154	0.0436	7,005	0.0533
Missouri	247	0.0038	337	0.0054	3,562	0.0529	4,122	0.0706	3,794	0.0700	2,649	0.0535	14,127	0.0616
Nebraska	54	0.0025	85	0.0041	494	0.0233	731	0.0375	823	0.0429	773	0.0429	2,821	0.0362
Nevada	--	--	--	--	601	0.0389	888	0.0621	1,249	0.0958	1,501	0.1334	4,239	0.0784
New Mexico	575	0.0248	640	0.0286	1,761	0.0715	1,845	0.0837	1,533	0.0794	1,094	0.0650	6,233	0.0753
Oregon	235	0.0060	299	0.0079	1,446	0.0371	1,931	0.0533	2,313	0.0692	2,550	0.0841	8,240	0.0593
Pennsylvania	105	0.0008	301	0.0024	4,391	0.0322	4,805	0.0400	4,731	0.0418	3,752	0.0350	17,679	0.0371
Rhode Island	21	0.0020	43	0.0043	501	0.0467	565	0.0575	441	0.0506	309	0.0375	1,816	0.0484
Texas	2,060	0.0077	3,522	0.0140	16,138	0.0566	12,582	0.0554	10,260	0.0514	9,100	0.0514	48,080	0.0541

--Data not available.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data.

Table 13.--Sex and racial/ethnic status of combined grade 9–12 dropouts reported as percent of all dropouts: 1991–92 school year (40 states reporting detailed district–level dropout data)

	Grade 9–12 dropouts, percent who were:						
	Male	Female	American Indian/ Alaskan native	Asian Pacific	Black, not Hispanic	Hispanic	White, not Hispanic
Total	56.1	43.9	1.8	2.4	23.8	21.2	50.8
Alabama	56.7	43.3	0.3	0.4	61.2	0.3	37.8
Arizona	54.5	45.5	11.6	1.3	5.4	35.4	46.3
Arkansas	68.2	31.8	0.3	0.7	31.6	0.7	66.7
California	54.6	45.[illegible]	1.0	7.1	13.7	50.7	27.4
Colorado	55.3	44.7	1.9	2.9	9.2	30.5	55.5
Connecticut	55.1	44.9	0.2	1.9	21.4	25.9	50.6
Delaware	57.7	42.3	0.3	1.6	40.3	5.5	52.3
District of Columbia	51.3	48.7	0.1	1.5	91.4	5.7	1.3
Florida	58.9	41.1	0.2	0.9	33.1	16.6	49.2
Illinois	55.4	44.6	0.2	1.5	37.2	18.6	42.5
Indiana	56.0	44.0	0.2	0.2	16.1	2.8	80.7
Iowa	54.9	45.1	1.0	2.8	8.5	3.0	84.8
Kansas	56.0	44.0	1.8	1.7	12.8	9.1	74.6
Louisiana	54.1	45.9	0.8	1.6	58.9	1.5	37.3
Maine	56.2	43.8	0.7	1.4	0.8	0.1	96.9
Maryland	57.2	42.8	0.2	1.4	55.8	2.4	40.2
Massachusetts	57.0	43.0	0.3	3.8	14.7	19.7	61.5
Minnesota	56.4	43.6	5.9	4.2	13.5	4.0	72.4
Mississippi	57.7	42.3	0.6	0.5	55.1	0.1	43.7
Missouri	55.7	44.3	0.2	0.8	24.3	0.8	73.9
Nebraska	54.8	45.2	3.9	2.0	9.9	7.4	76.9
Nevada	52.8	47.2	2.7	3.6	11.1	18.3	64.3
New Jersey	55.4	44.6	0.5	2.5	31.1	25.1	40.8
New Mexico	53.8	46.2	12.1	0.9	2.7	50.5	33.8
North Carolina	57.7	42.3	3.2	0.5	36.1	0.8	59.3
North Dakota	59.4	40.6	35.1	1.0	0.3	1.8	61.9
Ohio	59.2	40.8	0.2	0.6	17.5	2.3	79.4
Oklahoma	53.3	46.7	12.0	0.6	10.4	4.2	72.9
Oregon	54.8	45.2	2.8	2.2	4.7	8.8	81.5
Pennsylvania	56.1	43.9	0.2	1.6	31.7	7.8	58.7
Rhode Island	60.6	39.4	0.1	2.7	9.7	15.4	72.1
South Carolina	60.2	39.8	0.3	0.1	46.8	0.4	52.4
South Dakota	53.6	46.4	45.1	0.3	0.9	1.1	52.6
Tennessee	57.7	42.3	0.1	0.5	22.7	0.3	76.4
Texas	54.8	45.2	0.2	1.6	17.6	46.4	34.2
Utah	55.1	44.9	3.4	1.8	1.0	11.6	82.2
Virginia	58.9	41.1	0.4	2.5	33.9	4.3	58.9
West Virginia	56.2	43.8	0.1	0.1	3.4	0.1	96.2
Wisconsin	59.3	40.7	2.1	1.3	32.9	7.3	56.4
Wyoming	55.3	44.7	7.3	0.5	1.5	12.3	78.4

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data.

PART 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The first year's dropout data are not completely comparable from state to state, but they do provide an important statistic and they reflect the work of many states to support a nationally uniform count. NCES will report data for those states that adhered to the CCD definition and reporting standards.

Steps Toward Future Collections

All but two or three states are expected to participate in the CCD dropout collection by 1994-95. In anticipation of this, NCES will consider the following activities:

1. Establish a task force of states to determine how consistency can be achieved in reporting end-of-year and October 1 re-enrolling students (systemic biases). Particular attention should be paid to the role of individual student record systems, which can allow data to be recorded in a variety of ways while still producing reports consistent with the CCD. The problem of record systems that do not allow student information to be continued across school years should also be examined.

2. Continue to work with states to achieve consistency in the year and grade to which summer dropouts are attributed, how adult and secondary education GED students are categorized, whether 12th grade completers who do not graduate are dropouts, and how cut-off dates are implemented. These are considered "superficial" biases because their correction should not require systemic changes in a state's reporting system.

3. Poll states to determine the impact of counting students who move to adult education GED programs as transfers if the district tracks these students for the remainder of the school year, and reports those who drop out of the GED program in this time as dropouts.

4. Collect information from states that use individual record systems or have some other means of providing detailed student information that can quantify the effects of the systemic and superficial biases described above. It may be possible to impute or statistically adjust nonstandard counts.

5. Report dropouts using an unadjusted rate. The differences between the adjusted and unadjusted rates do not outweigh the difficulties of the adjusted rate, particularly the problem of not being able to use it for all grades or for all districts. The unadjusted rate is simple to calculate and easy to explain.

Although this report has focused on differences among state reporting practices, and difficulties in adopting the standard CCD definition, the accomplishments of this first year should not be overlooked. More than 9,000 school districts in 43 states put in place and reported a complex dropout statistic, one that enforced precise rules for determining whether a

student was to be counted as a dropout and required tracking students across school districts and school years. Almost all states anticipate that they will be reporting in agreement with the standard definition by the 1994-95 school year. There is high likelihood that this valuable statistic will be available to guide policy in the near future.

Appendix A. Dropout Task Force Report

RECOMMENDATIONS OF DROPOUT STATISTIC REVIEW TASK FORCE

Report to the National Forum on Education Statistics

July 26, 1993

National Forum on Education Statistics
Dropout Statistic Review Task Force, 1993

Dr. Judy Burnes	Colorado Department of Education Chair
Mr. Bob Burton	National Center for Education Statistics
Dr. James Fulton	California Department of Education
Dr. Lee Hoffman	National Center for Education Statistics
Dr. John Jones	Missouri Department of Education
Mr. Robert Jones	Oregon Department of Education
Dr. Glynn Ligon	Evaluation Software Publishing, Inc.
Dr. Robert Lockwood	Alabama Department of Education
Dr. Marilyn McMillen	National Center for Education Statistics
Mr. Jeffrey Nellhaus	Massachusetts Department of Education
Ms. Caryn Shoemaker	Arizona Department of Education
Dr. David Smith	Nevada Department of Education
Mr. Roger Stephan	Alaska Department of Education
Mr. Ed Strozyk	Washington Department of Education
Dr. Kathy Tuck	District of Columbia Public Schools

Committee Charge

Review the NCES dropout formula and report to the Forum on this subject at the July 26-28 meeting.

Background

At the January 1993 meeting of the National Forum on Education Statistics, Caryn Shoemaker of the Arizona Department of Education presented a paper raising various concerns about the dropout statistic proposed for use by NCES. In response, the Forum approved a resolution calling upon the Steering Committee to establish a Task Force on this issue which would report to the Forum at its July 26-28, 1993 meeting.

The Dropout Statistic Review Task Force was established with representatives from ten states, the District of Columbia, and NCES. Judy Burnes of Colorado served as chair for the group. In addition, NCES contracted with Glynn Ligon of Evaluation Software Publishing, Inc. to conduct analyses and simulations of proposed solutions to the problems identified.

The Dropout Task Force met for the first time in Atlanta on April 16-17, 1993. At this meeting, issues and problems were discussed and a proposal developed to analyze three alternative definitions of dropouts (formula numerator) and six alternative definitions of the membership base (formula denominator). At its second meeting in Washington D.C. on June 28-29, 1993, the Task Force reviewed the results of Dr. Ligon's work and developed the following recommendations regarding the dropout statistic.

Recommendations

Numerator. The Task Force recommends that the following definition be used as the numerator for the dropout formula.

A dropout is an individual who:

(1) (a) Was enrolled at the end of the previous school term, (e.g., 1990-91) or

(b) Was enrolled at any time during the current school term (e.g. 1991-92);

(2) Was not enrolled on October I of the following school term (e.g. October It 1992);

(3) Has not graduated from high school or completed a state or district-approved educational program; and

(4) Does not meet any of the following exclusionary conditions:

(a) Transfer to another public school districts private school, or state- or district-approved education program,

(b) Temporary absence due to suspension or school approved illness, or

(c) Death.

Both the current NCES definition and the proposed definition allow the current year dropout count to be adjusted to exclude or delete students who returned and who are in school the following October. The proposed definition differs from the current NCES definition in only one respect: it allows the October adjustment for both students who drop out during the summer preceding the current school year (summer dropouts) and for students who drop out during the current school term (school year dropouts). In the original NCES definition, the following October adjustment was allowed only for students who drop out during the current school year; it was not allowed for students who drop out during the summer preceding the current school year. (This distinction was made by NCES in order to prevent the possibility of a student missing an entire year and still not being called a dropout because he/she returned the following October.)

The major arguments in support of the Task Force proposal are:

- The proposal allows for the retrieval of both summer and school year dropouts; i.e., it treats all dropouts the same way. Task Force members felt that this would reduce data burden.

- It continues the October adjustment process. (For states that have already implemented the NCES system, eliminating the adjustment process would result in increased dropout rates which would create political problems in the state.)

- It allows time for record transfer requests to clear before a student is declared a dropout.

- It does not call a student a dropout who has returned to school the following October 1.

Denominator. The Task Force recommends that the following definition be used as the denominator for the dropout formula.

NCES should base the CCD dropout rate on the October 1, Fall 1 membership count for now; and should add to CCD the capacity to separate "no shows" (students who fail to enroll at the beginning of the current year term) from regular term dropouts in order to include in the membership base those students expected to enroll who failed to do go.

The proposed definition differs substantially from the current NCES definition in that it makes no attempt to adjust for increasing and decreasing enrollment or migration. The Task Force recommends that NCES add the capacity to separate summer and regular year dropouts at the next redesign of the CCD.

The major arguments in support of the Task Force proposal are:

- The October 1 membership count is comparable among states and contains a minimum amount of duplication between reporting entities.
- The data for the membership base are already a part of the CCD system.
- This count is easy to explain to the public.
- None of the currently available alternatives adequately adjusts for the impact of various types of mobility.

Impact of student movement on dropout rates

The Task Force spent a considerable amount of time discussing the impact of student movement on dropout rates. Three types of mobility were identified: (1) long-term increasing and decreasing enrollment; (2) children from migrant families, whose mobility is reasonably predictable from year to year; and (3) other mobility, including that created by choice programs and the (largely urban) mobility or moving around that some referred to as "Brownian motion". The impact of this mobility is to inflate or deflate dropout rates in a way that depends upon the specific characteristics of each particular situation. For example, dropout rates may be significantly inflated in high mobility situations where there are students counted (in the numerator) as dropouts who are not represented in membership (in the denominator).

After examining several alternative methods for addressing mobility using existing data, the Task Force finally decided that none of them was really adequate to deal with this problem. In attempting to adjust for one aspect of a situation, each alternative formula created problems for another situation. For example, some of the formulas attempt to deal with mobility by adding the dropouts back into the denominator. While this approach may help in some situations, it will also create distortion in other situations because some students will be counted more than once in the denominator. The Task Force also considered using a cumulative enrollment count approach, which may provide the best method for dealing with mobility problems. However, for several states, this approach would impose a large increase in data burden. Therefore, this approach was not considered politically realistic at this time.

After considerable debate, the Task Force finally decided that no formula that relies on available data provides an adequate adjustment for mobility. Therefore, the Task Force recommendation is to use the fall membership count as the membership base for the denominator.

Other Recommendations

1. **Reporting 1991-92 Dropout Data.** There was considerable confusion about the October adjustment aspect of the NCES dropout definition during the 1991-92 reporting period. Therefore, the 1991-92 data will not be comparable by state.

   The Task Force recommends that all published 1991-92 data be footnoted to indicate which states have provided data according to the definition.

2. **Instructions.**

   The Task Force recommends that the Dropout Statistic Collector's Handbook be updated to include a clear definition and examples of the dropout definition and clarification of the membership base to be used in calculating the dropout rate.

3. **The Future.**

   The Task Force recommends that, in the next CCD redesign, the inclusion of the dropout statistic be reconsidered in light of issues of accuracy, burden, ability to deal with mobility problems, and usefulness of the data.

The Task Force discussed whether the dropout statistic should be included in the CCD, particularly in light of the shift in standards-based education from grade-based systems to performance-based systems, the increasing use of year-round schools, problems created by retention in grade, problems of obtaining out of state records requests, and the use of various high school completion criteria and certificates/diplomas.

Response to Dropout Statistic Review Task Force Recommendations

In July, 1993 the Dropout Statistic Review Task Force presented a thoughtful set of recommendations about the CCD definition to the National Forum on Education Statistics. This report was accepted and passed on to NCES. The preceding section illustrates that Center has acted on several of these, and is considering others.

Unadjusted rates. The Task Force recommended that NCES compute a dropout rate using the October membership count of the dropout year as a denominator. The argument was that a completely unadjusted rate would be easier to explain than the proposed adjustment (the average of October membership counts over the dropout year and the reporting year, plus the dropouts), which could not compensate entirely for the effects of student mobility.

NCES compared the rates for the first year's dropout data As the rates did not differ substantially, only the unadjusted rate will be published in the future.

Two summers. The CCD dropout definition counts students who fail to enroll by October 1 as dropouts. This allows a student 365 days in which to drop out -- from October 1 through the following September 30. The Dropout Statistic Review Task Force recommended that an additional summer be added to this 365 days, so that a student who drops out during this first summer has until October of the following year -- operationally, 366 days -- to return.

The change would equalize somewhat the opportunity to recapture summer versus regular year dropouts: in the current definition, those who drop out one day before October 1 are just as much dropouts as those who drop out 360 days earlier. However, there are three problems in the proposed change. The first difficulty is concern that the dropout statistic would be taken less seriously if a student were able to miss an entire year of school without being counted as a dropout; for example, completing the 1990-91 year and not re-enrolling until the fall of 1992. The second problem is that the current CCD dropout count is tied to the membership count: both are conducted annually, and give a once-every-365-days observation. If the dropout determination took into account two summers, the reporting periods for dropouts and students in membership would not be the same. Finally, it is likely that tracking students over four reporting periods would be more difficult than following them across three years, and could introduce additional reporting error.

Because of these problems, NCES will not change the dropout statistic's collection year, but will retain the October 1 -- September 30 year.

Separating summer dropouts. The Task Force recommended that NCES add to the CCD the capacity to report students who drop out during the school year separately from those who complete a year and fail to re-enroll in the next year. Thus it would be possible to add these "no show" students to the membership for the year in which they were expected.

This change would ensure that students who complete a year of school but do not enroll again the following year were considered in the denominator for the year in which they appeared as dropouts. However, separate summer and regular school year reporting are not an option under the existing CCD system, and would double the amount of information districts are asked to report. More and more states are adopting individual student record systems from which statistical data can be abstracted for reporting purposes. NCES encourages the development of these individual record systems and the automation of state record keeping and reporting procedures. As such systems are established, it will be possible to separate summer from regular year dropouts with little additional reporting burden on states and school districts.

Footnoting 1991-92 differences. The Task Force recommended that NCES published reports footnote state differences in applying the dropout definition, particularly in the treatment of October re-enrollments. NCES agrees that this is an important distinction, and reported only those states that followed the CCD standard in treating summer dropouts and end of year or next year returnees.

Instructions. As recommended by the Task Force, NCES updated the instructions included in the Dropout Statistic Collector's Handbook, soliciting comment from the CCD or

dropout coordinator in every state. These were made available to SEAs for distribution in March, 1994.

Future decisions. The Task Force questioned whether the dropout statistic would be relevant in the future, as trends develop toward more year-round schools and standards-based rather than grade-based systems. The Task Force also questioned whether problems such as tracking out-of-state transcript requests, students who were retained in grade, and the variety of high school completion credentials in different states would make the statistic more difficult to collect than it is worth.

State participation in the dropout statistic does not suggest at this time that the statistic is of little value or too difficult to collect. However, the factors of usefulness, feasibility and burden will be considered in future approvals of the CCD.

Appendix B. Dropout Reporting Interview Questions

_____State _____Date(s)
_____Caller

State 1991-92 Dropout Statistic Telephone Interviews

Thank you for efforts to report dropout data on this year's CCD. It's a new and important statistic; we want to be sure we can document the uniformity of the count across states. This phone call is to confirm the data you reported, and the procedures that were used to define and report dropouts.

☹ Do you want to refer me to someone else in your agency for dropout reporting information?

_____ _____
name phone

☹ I have seven general questions about how your state decided which students would be reported as dropouts. In some cases I will ask you to confirm information you gave earlier, so please be patient.

1) Your 1992-93 CCD agency survey did not report:

_____

Is there a law or policy prohibiting you from reporting this detail?

___Y ___N Why missing?

_____

_____

2) Do you use the same definition and procedures for the CCD dropout report as you do for your state reports?

___Y ___N (Differences; drop > how many days?)

_____

_____

3) How did you report summer dropouts, that is, students who completed the 1990-91 school year but did not show up for school at the beginning of the 1991-92 school year?

i. Are these students counted as dropouts from the year they completed (1990-91) or the year for ___Y ___N which they did not return (1991-92?)

ii. Are these students counted as dropouts from the grade they completed in 1990-91 or the grade ___Y ___N for which they did not return in 1991-92?

iii. What was the actual cut-off date used to determine that a student who did not return to school in the fall was a dropout? That is, a "no show" was a dropout if he or she was not enrolled by:

_____(date).

iv. On the last point, was a dropout's status changed if you determined that he or she had actually ___Y ___N enrolled shortly thereafter, say, two weeks after the cut-off date?

4) On the subject of students who dropped out during the regular school year:

i. How did you classify students who dropped out during 1991-92 but re-enrolled before the end of that school year?

_____ Dropout

_____ Continuing

ii. In your report for the 1991-92 school year, how did you classify students who dropped out and did not return by the end of the 1991-92 school year but did re-enroll at the beginning of the next school year?

_____ Dropout 1991-92

_____ Continuing

5) The CCD set October 1, 1992 as the cut-off date for deciding whether a student who had been enrolled in 1991-92 was a dropout.

i. Did you use October 1, or some other date (specify), as a cut-off date?

_____Oct 1

_____Other Date

ii. If you did use a cut-off date, did you literally freeze your records on that day, or continue to accept corrections? For example, how would you have reported a student who was missing with no further information on (cut-off date) if you got a transcript request a month later that showed he had enrolled in another district at the beginning of the school year?

_____Freeze

_____Other:_____

6) How did you report students who did not complete high school, but moved from the regular school program to some other form of education or training? More specifically, are the following cases reported as dropouts or continuing students? **(Code "D" or "C".)**

_____ i. Transfer to an alternative school or program run by the local schools.

_____ ii. Transfer to a GED preparatory program offered as adult education by an LEA or a vocational/technical school.

_____ iii. Transfer to a GED preparatory program offered as a secondary program (usually these cases are reimbursable under the state's minimum foundation program)

_____ iv. Early completion of high school requirements and transfer to postsecondary program before the award of a high school diploma.

_____ iv. Enrollment in Job Corps.

7) Does your state award or recognize any high school completion credential other than the regular high school diploma and the GED-based equivalency diploma?

___Y ___N (if Yes, what?)_____

i. Do you classify students who complete the 12th grade and who leave school without receiving a diploma as:

_____ Completers?

_____Dropouts?

Appendix C. Technical Note on Rate Estimates and Detailed Tables

Calculating Rates, and Estimating Effects of Improperly Reported Summer Dropouts and Students Re-enrolling October 1

Calculating Adjusted Dropout Rates

The adjusted rate was calculated for each grade by averaging membership across two years and adding the dropouts to this average. The denominator of the adjusted rate was:

[Y1G1 membership + Y2G2 membership/2] + Y1G1 dropouts

where Y1 is the year of interest, G1 is the grade of interest, and Y2 and G2 are the subsequent year and grade.

Summer Dropouts

Summer dropouts, students who completed one school year but did not re-enroll for the subsequent year, were supposed to be counted as dropouts for the year and grade for which they failed to enroll. A number of states counted these students as dropouts from the year and grade they had completed.

Misallocating summer dropouts who had been promoted to the next grade could bias grade-level dropout rates. (Dropouts who were not promoted would not bias grade rates, but would affect annual rates to the extent that these changed from one year to the next.) The 1989 dropout field test had reported the number of students dropping out during the school year and over the summer. Although this field test did not use a representative sample of school district, the proportions of summer dropouts reported in that study were considered adequate to generate estimates of the bias in accounting summer dropouts to the wrong grade. The estimates presented here do not include ungraded students in the membership counts (denominators) for the rates.

Table C-1 computes dropout estimates for misallocating summer dropouts, using data from the 14 states that reported dropouts correctly. Thus the "0 Percent" column represents the true dropout rate. The dropout rate for a grade was estimated by assuming that summer dropouts for a grade were attributed to the prior grade. Regular year dropouts were attributed to the grade reported. For example, the "100 Percent" rate for grade 7 is based on 54 percent of the reported grade 7 dropouts (the estimated proportion of dropouts who had left during the regular school year) and 41 percent of the dropouts for grade 8 (the estimated proportion of grade 8 dropouts who had failed to re-enroll after completing grade 7 in the previous year). This procedures backs the grade 8 summer dropouts into grade 7; and allocates the grade 7 summer dropouts to grade 6 (with the result that they do not appear in the calculations). The denominator for the grade 7 rate is the grade 7 membership.

Table C-1.--Estimated rates with 0, 50, and 100 percent of summer dropouts accounted to prior grade

Grade	Dropouts	Proportion School Year	Membership	Rates, summer to prior grade: 0%	50%	100%
7	10,938	0.54	1,021,570	1.1	1.1	1.1
8	14,201	0.59	971,087	1.5	1.7	2.1
9	56,121	0.79	1,169,217	4.8	4.6	4.5
10	60,305	0.87	1,033,006	5.8	5.8	5.7
11	53,654	0.89	925,569	5.8	6.1	6.3
12	46,324	0.78	908,138	5.1	4.5	4.0

October 1 Returners

Students who were enrolled on October 1 were not to be counted as dropouts regardless of their status during the prior school year. Some states did not follow this reporting practice, but instead counted as dropouts those regular school year dropouts who re-enrolled by October 1 of the next year. Anecdotal reports from SEA personnel working with dropout statistics suggested that up to 25 percent of dropouts may re-enroll at the beginning of the next school year. This proportion was applied to the proportions of regular year dropouts shown in table C-1 in estimating the bias introduced when October 1 returners are counted as dropouts. For example, the inflated grade 7 rate increases 54 percent of grade 7 dropouts by 4/3 (those who dropped out during the regular year) and adds them to the 46 percent assumed to be summer dropouts. The analysis used data from the 14 states reporting acceptably. Table C-2 shows the results.

Table C-2.--Dropout rates with 0 and 25 percent of dropouts estimated to be incorrectly reported October 1 returners

Grade	Dropouts	Membership	Rates, returners reported incorrectly 0%	25%
7	10,938	1,021,570	1.1	1.3
8	14,201	971,087	1.5	1.8
9	56,121	1,169,217	4.8	6.0
10	60,305	1,033,006	5.8	7.5
11	53,654	925,569	5.8	7.5
12	46,324	908,138	5.1	6.4

Detail Tables on Dropout Counts and Rates

Table C-3 shows the number of students in membership and dropping out in 1991-92 for each of grades 7 through 12, by state. Because of the variation in how states applied the CCD definition, dropout rates should not be compared between the 14 standard states and other states; or among the 29 nonstandard states.

Table C-4 shows the adjusted and unadjusted rates by 1991-92 membership size for each state. This is the source of table 9, discussed in the text of the report.

Table C3. --Membership and numbers and unadjusted ratios of dropouts by grade: 1991–92 school year (43 states reporting district-level dropout data)

	Grade 7			Grade 8			Grade 9			Grade 10			Grade 11			Grade 12			Grades 9–12		
	Member-ship	Dropout	Ratio	Member-ship	Dropout	Ratio	Member-ship	Dropout	Ratio	Member-ship	Dropout	Ratio	Member-ship	Dropout	Ratio	Member-ship	Dropout	Ratio	Member-ship	Dropout	Ratio
Alabama	60,705	447	0.0074	56,454	884	0.0157	61,624	4,061	0.0659	49,727	3,369	0.0677	46,236	2,922	0.0632	42,318	1,701	0.0402	199,907	12,053	0.0603
Arizona	50,772	1,629	0.0321	47,446	1,614	0.0340	49,859	5,011	0.1005	44,023	4,564	0.1037	36,473	4,155	0.1060	35,872	4,854	0.1353	166,227	18,584	0.1105
Arkansas	36,046	311	0.0086	34,766	617	0.0177	33,925	897	0.0264	31,793	1,308	0.0411	29,580	1,516	0.0513	27,714	1,266	0.0456	123,012	4,989	0.0406
California	375,955	4,654	0.0124	360,336	5,550	0.0154	407,221	16,714	0.0410	379,162	22,007	0.0580	331,650	18,534	0.0559	266,314	15,637	0.0587	1,384,347	72,892	0.0527
Colorado	44,981	118	0.0026	42,461	184	0.0043	44,486	1,922	0.0432	40,796	2,822	0.0692	36,265	3,243	0.0847	33,214	2,111	0.0636	156,763	10,098	0.0644
Connecticut	35,051	310	0.0088	33,444	340	0.0102	35,703	1,770	0.0496	32,262	1,631	0.0506	30,420	1,454	0.0478	26,639	1,076	0.0376	127,024	5,931	0.0467
Delaware	8,181	10	0.0012	7,523	29	0.0039	8,092	360	0.0445	7,372	316	0.0429	6,237	245	0.0396	5,960	181	0.0304	27,661	1,105	0.0399
District of Columbia	5,700	246	0.0432	5,249	222	0.0423	5,216	495	0.0949	5,751	733	0.1275	4,333	549	0.1267	3,602	400	0.1110	18,904	2,177	0.1152
Florida	144,361	184	0.0013	134,914	736	0.0055	151,373	5,956	0.0393	134,552	6,793	0.0505	116,710	5,191	0.0445	99,872	4,067	0.0407	502,507	22,007	0.0438
Idaho	16,571	--	--	17,825	--	--	17,940	1,246	0.0695	16,699	1,792	0.1073	15,172	1,678	0.1106	14,346	1,542	0.1075	64,157	6,258	0.0975
Illinois	140,734	497	0.0035	132,146	831	0.0063	145,287	6,290	0.0433	133,012	8,467	0.0637	120,055	8,021	0.0668	109,160	6,293	0.0576	507,514	29,071	0.0573
Indiana	76,577	126	0.0016	74,361	345	0.0046	80,358	3,648	0.0454	69,899	3,363	0.0483	66,363	3,396	0.0520	61,026	2,513	0.0412	276,446	12,922	0.0467
Iowa	37,502	13	0.0003	36,164	36	0.0010	37,533	899	0.0240	34,806	1,116	0.0321	34,086	1,453	0.0426	32,386	1,261	0.0389	138,813	4,731	0.0341
Kansas	33,760	58	0.0017	32,264	71	0.0022	34,074	1,169	0.0349	30,568	1,506	0.0493	28,265	1,524	0.0539	26,033	1,390	0.0534	118,940	5,609	0.0472
Louisiana	64,186	1,075	0.0167	56,744	1,364	0.0240	64,707	2,884	0.0446	52,651	2,394	0.0455	45,007	2,221	0.0493	39,420	1,433	0.0364	201,785	8,932	0.0443
Maine	16,290	6	0.0004	15,882	16	0.0010	15,064	351	0.0233	13,967	436	0.0313	13,429	462	0.0344	13,029	414	0.0318	55,509	1,665	0.0300
Maryland	55,311	357	0.0065	51,412	529	0.0103	57,014	3,680	0.0645	47,734	2,654	0.0556	43,646	2,066	0.0476	41,348	2,193	0.0530	189,744	10,613	0.0559
Massachusetts	61,655	110	0.0018	59,569	203	0.0034	63,335	1,933	0.0305	59,045	2,192	0.0371	56,092	2,111	0.0376	53,964	1,282	0.0238	232,436	7,518	0.0323
Michigan	120,566	--	--	117,165	--	--	126,231	8,410	0.0666	109,786	5,784	0.0527	101,759	5,529	0.0543	93,305	3,333	0.0357	433,081	23,056	0.0532
Minnesota	50,799	295	0.0058	48,573	373	0.0077	49,761	1,307	0.0263	47,669	2,361	0.0495	46,035	2,669	0.0580	44,062	2,755	0.0625	187,547	9,092	0.0485
Mississippi	42,183	669	0.0163	38,663	766	0.0198	40,879	2,177	0.0533	34,124	2,029	0.0595	30,052	1,645	0.0547	26,480	1,154	0.0436	131,535	7,005	0.0533
Missouri	65,443	247	0.0038	62,396	337	0.0054	67,304	3,562	0.0529	58,404	4,122	0.0706	54,179	3,794	0.0700	49,527	2,649	0.0535	229,414	14,127	0.0616
Nebraska	21,284	54	0.0025	20,491	85	0.0041	21,239	494	0.0233	19,481	731	0.0375	19,163	823	0.0429	18,023	773	0.0429	77,906	2,821	0.0362
Nevada	16,020	--	--	15,237	--	--	15,451	601	0.0389	14,290	888	0.0621	13,043	1,249	0.0958	11,252	1,501	0.1334	54,036	4,239	0.0784
New Jersey	83,149	378	0.0045	79,266	377	0.0048	85,345	2,848	0.0334	77,714	2,401	0.0309	73,935	2,435	0.0329	70,982	1,923	0.0271	307,976	9,607	0.0312
New Mexico	23,221	575	0.0248	22,366	640	0.0286	24,621	1,761	0.0715	22,035	1,845	0.0837	19,300	1,533	0.0794	16,820	1,094	0.0650	82,776	6,233	0.0753
North Carolina	84,463	340	0.0040	81,581	943	0.0116	90,427	5,672	0.0627	77,498	4,856	0.0627	69,965	3,491	0.0499	64,074	1,869	0.0295	301,964	15,908	0.0527
North Dakota	9,260	3	0.0003	9,079	12	0.0013	9,093	82	0.0090	8,501	179	0.0211	8,206	187	0.0228	7,879	182	0.0231	33,679	630	0.0187
Ohio	140,042	667	0.0063	131,083	1,106	0.0084	144,963	4,932	0.0344	124,949	4,911	0.0393	118,212	5,161	0.0436	112,094	5,833	0.0520	500,218	20,907	0.0418
Oklahoma	44,521	352	0.0079	42,912	467	0.0109	44,091	1,651	0.0374	40,057	1,916	0.0478	35,490	1,662	0.0468	35,676	1,202	0.0337	155,316	6,431	0.0414
Oregon	39,312	235	0.0060	37,953	299	0.0079	38,946	1,446	0.0371	36,251	1,931	0.0533	33,432	2,313	0.0692	30,316	2,550	0.0841	138,945	8,240	0.0593
Pennsylvania	126,646	105	0.0008	123,347	301	0.0024	136,292	4,391	0.0322	120,116	4,805	0.0400	113,094	4,731	0.0418	107,266	3,752	0.0350	476,768	17,679	0.0371
Rhode Island	10,510	21	0.0020	10,033	43	0.0043	10,728	501	0.0467	9,831	565	0.0575	8,706	441	0.0506	8,231	309	0.0375	37,496	1,816	0.0484
South Carolina	51,326	107	0.0021	47,205	270	0.0057	54,798	1,932	0.0353	43,866	1,563	0.0356	37,213	980	0.0263	34,629	573	0.0165	170,506	5,048	0.0296
South Dakota	9,985	40	0.0040	9,521	44	0.0046	9,247	371	0.0401	9,320	436	0.0468	8,752	430	0.0491	8,627	310	0.0359	35,946	1,547	0.0430
Tennessee	66,663	676	0.0102	62,864	792	0.0126	70,667	3,417	0.0484	60,220	3,651	0.0606	54,579	3,251	0.0596	49,971	3,176	0.0636	235,437	13,495	0.0573
Texas	266,602	2,060	0.0077	251,003	3,522	0.0140	264,944	16,136	0.0566	227,249	12,582	0.0554	199,536	10,260	0.0514	177,194	9,100	0.0514	868,925	48,080	0.0541
Utah	37,417	45	0.0012	33,822	84	0.0025	35,727	216	0.0060	33,885	675	0.0199	30,494	999	0.0328	26,169	1,256	0.0446	126,275	3,146	0.0245
Vermont	4,951	16	0.0032	4,630	21	0.0045	6,624	215	0.0325	6,082	238	0.0391	5,764	335	0.0581	5,577	272	0.0488	24,047	1,060	0.0441
Virginia	77,527	401	0.0052	76,988	830	0.0108	79,647	3,955	0.0497	70,729	3,361	0.0475	64,199	2,696	0.0420	62,990	2,312	0.0367	277,565	12,326	0.0444
West Virginia	26,137	62	0.0024	26,306	217	0.0082	27,263	793	0.0291	24,723	1,104	0.0447	23,443	1,031	0.0440	22,079	717	0.0325	97,508	3,645	0.0374
Wisconsin	60,755	51	0.0008	58,036	43	0.0007	63,740	1,200	0.0188	58,256	1,248	0.0214	57,072	1,627	0.0285	53,909	2,906	0.0539	232,979	6,981	0.0300
Wyoming	8,055	11	0.0014	7,457	24	0.0032	7,448	257	0.0345	7,248	436	0.0602	6,786	442	0.0651	6,361	334	0.0523	27,883	1,469	0.0527

--Data not available.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data.

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Table C4.--Number of districts and average adjusted and unadjusted dropout rates by membership size category, grades 9–12 combined, in districts with membership: 1991–92 school year (43 states reporting district-level dropout data).

	All districts			District membership range										
				Membership less than 100			Membership less than 100–499			Membership less than 500–999			Membership greater or equal to 1,000		
	Number	Average adjusted rate	Average unadjusted rate	Number	Average adjusted rate	Average unadjusted rate	Number	Average adjusted rate	Average unadjusted rate	Number	Average adjusted rate	Average unadjusted rate	Number	Average adjusted rate	Average unadjusted rate
Alabama	129	0.0526	0.0533	--	--	--	19	0.0461	0.0462	54	0.0467	0.0472	56	0.0595	0.0644
Arizona	100	0.1036	0.1122	6	0.1007	0.1082	42	0.1045	0.1141	22	0.1095	0.1183	30	0.1007	0.1102
Arkansas	319	0.0735	0.0656	66	0.1971	0.2400	193	0.0472	0.0485	33	0.0330	0.0333	25	0.0167	0.0167
California	434	0.0432	0.0441	26	0.0361	0.0361	85	0.0317	0.0318	75	0.0512	0.0520	246	0.0536	0.0543
Colorado	176	0.0463	0.0477	67	0.0320	0.0328	65	0.0402	0.0411	17	0.0456	0.0466	27	0.0675	0.0703
Connecticut	124	0.1061	0.1371	2	0.3091	0.4304	36	0.0303	0.0310	50	0.0280	0.0285	36	0.0572	0.0587
Delaware	19	0.0322	0.0323	--	--	--	2	0.0149	0.0146	9	0.0417	0.0420	8	0.0400	0.0402
District of Columbia	1	0.1122	0.1215	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	0.1122	0.1215
Florida	67	0.0427	0.0423	--	--	--	7	0.0512	0.0506	10	0.0331	0.0325	50	0.0440	0.0439
Idaho	105	0.0695	0.0747	24	0.0364	0.0375	46	0.0619	0.0665	19	0.0725	0.0767	16	0.1072	0.1190
Illinois	523	0.0418	0.0431	40	0.0336	0.0349	306	0.0283	0.0288	77	0.0361	0.0390	101	0.0670	0.0696
Indiana	291	0.0417	0.0425	--	--	--	127	0.0320	0.0326	95	0.0402	0.0412	69	0.0528	0.0536
Iowa	359	0.0287	0.0295	27	0.0136	0.0139	261	0.0209	0.0213	29	0.0270	0.0276	22	0.0532	0.0553
Kansas	302	0.0392	0.0405	78	0.0169	0.0171	176	0.0277	0.0282	29	0.0516	0.0536	19	0.0808	0.0832
Louisiana	66	0.0374	0.0365	--	--	--	4	0.0307	0.0297	16	0.0337	0.0326	46	0.0477	0.0472
Maine	116	0.0275	0.028	7	0.0080	0.0078	64	0.0230	0.0231	39	0.0290	0.0294	6	0.0502	0.0517
Maryland	24	0.0507	0.0519	--	--	--	--	--	--	2	0.0456	0.0467	22	0.0556	0.0571
Massachusetts	256	0.0272	0.0275	--	--	--	83	0.0194	0.0195	108	0.0177	0.0178	64	0.0444	0.0451
Michigan	524	0.047	0.0479	26	0.0402	0.0415	240	0.0399	0.0406	155	0.0487	0.0497	103	0.0590	0.0597
Minnesota	310	0.0418	0.044	30	0.0595	0.0635	192	0.0166	0.0173	44	0.0267	0.0295	44	0.0623	0.0660
Mississippi	154	0.0653	0.0666	2	0.0948	0.0990	55	0.0574	0.0579	58	0.0556	0.0556	39	0.0533	0.0536
Missouri	449	0.0497	0.0513	93	0.0282	0.0287	246	0.0436	0.0450	58	0.0580	0.0602	52	0.0687	0.0712
Nebraska	303	0.0302	0.031	163	0.0143	0.0145	115	0.0202	0.0205	14	0.0365	0.0397	11	0.0478	0.0492
Nevada	16	0.0602	0.0642	1	0.0592	0.0656	6	0.0546	0.0565	3	0.0514	0.0536	6	0.0756	0.0810
New Jersey	268	0.0261	0.0265	--	--	--	62	0.0224	0.0227	108	0.0255	0.0259	98	0.0364	0.0370
New Mexico	88	0.0551	0.0578	24	0.0254	0.0256	31	0.0581	0.0612	14	0.0556	0.0581	19	0.0812	0.0863
North Carolina	130	0.0455	0.0457	--	--	--	12	0.0403	0.0402	32	0.0423	0.0420	86	0.0539	0.0549
North Dakota	201	0.018	0.0182	133	0.0094	0.0095	56	0.0202	0.0205	4	0.0206	0.0210	8	0.0214	0.0217
Ohio	609	0.0296	0.0303	5	0.0121	0.0124	280	0.0259	0.0263	199	0.0291	0.0295	125	0.0520	0.0531
Oklahoma	431	0.0375	0.0383	136	0.0246	0.0254	239	0.0349	0.0356	31	0.0451	0.0461	26	0.0456	0.0463
Oregon	175	0.0466	0.0483	36	0.0237	0.0239	69	0.0461	0.0472	32	0.0578	0.0601	39	0.0591	0.0619
Pennsylvania	496	0.0268	0.0271	1	0.0144	0.0143	164	0.0219	0.0221	211	0.0212	0.0214	122	0.0499	0.0507
Rhode Island	32	0.0447	0.0458	1	0.0597	0.0625	3	0.0256	0.0254	18	0.0397	0.0404	10	0.0539	0.0550
South Carolina	91	0.0287	0.0281	--	--	--	21	0.0297	0.0291	23	0.0256	0.0249	47	0.0310	0.0302
South Dakota	161	0.0317	0.0315	84	0.0139	0.0141	64	0.0303	0.0311	9	0.0346	0.0354	4	0.0480	0.0454
Tennessee	119	0.0535	0.0549	--	--	--	23	0.0413	0.0420	31	0.0625	0.0642	65	0.0567	0.0587
Texas	969	0.0396	0.0396	210	0.0185	0.0186	461	0.0325	0.0325	124	0.0481	0.0483	174	0.0592	0.0590
Utah	40	0.0151	0.0154	2	0.0000	0.0000	10	0.0166	0.0168	6	0.0186	0.0191	22	0.0250	0.0256
Vermont	60	0.0436	0.0453	5	0.0321	0.0330	37	0.0355	0.0362	15	0.0440	0.0454	3	0.0637	0.0666
Virginia	130	0.0442	0.0452	--	--	--	31	0.0421	0.0434	35	0.0462	0.0469	64	0.0444	0.0454
West Virginia	55	0.0359	0.0365	--	--	--	9	0.0331	0.0337	14	0.0367	0.0374	32	0.0379	0.0385
Wisconsin	371	0.0203	0.0208	20	0.0101	0.0101	227	0.0106	0.0107	76	0.0141	0.0142	48	0.0465	0.0481
Wyoming	47	0.0382	0.0396	6	0.0059	0.0061	24	0.0381	0.0397	10	0.0536	0.0560	7	0.0550	0.0575

--Data not available.

NOTE: State reporting practices vary and dropout data are not comparable across all states.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data.

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Table C5. --Racial/ethnic status of dropouts reported as percent of all dropouts, by grade: 1991–92 school year (43 states reporting district-level dropout data)

	Grade 9					Grade 10					Grade 11					Grade 12					Grades 9–12				
	American Indian/ Alaskan native dropout	Asian Pacific dropout	Black, not Hispanic dropout	Hispanic dropout	White, not Hispanic dropout	American Indian/ Alaskan native dropout	Asian Pacific dropout	Black, not Hispanic dropout	Hispanic dropout	White, not Hispanic dropout	American Indian/ Alaskan native dropout	Asian Pacific dropout	Black, not Hispanic dropout	Hispanic dropout	White, not Hispanic dropout	American Indian/ Alaskan native dropout	Asian Pacific dropout	Black, not Hispanic dropout	Hispanic dropout	White, not Hispanic dropout	American Indian/ Alaskan native dropout	Asian Pacific dropout	Black, not Hispanic dropout	Hispanic dropout	White, not Hispanic dropout
Alabama	0.2	0.4	59.2	0.3	39.8	0.3	0.3	61.5	0.2	37.8	0.3	0.4	62.7	0.3	36.3	0.5	0.6	62.8	0.2	35.9	0.3	0.4	61.2	0.3	37.8
Arizona	16.2	0.9	4.3	36.3	40.4	10.6	1.1	4.3	40.6	43.3	10.3	1.3	6	32.4	49.9	9	1.9	7.2	29.9	52.1	11.6	1.3	5.4	35.4	46.3
Arkansas	0.3	0.6	35.5	1.1	62.5	0.3	0.6	37.5	0.2	61.2	0.5	1.1	29.1	0.6	68.7	0.1	0.4	25.7	0.9	72.9	0.3	0.7	31.6	0.7	66.7
California	0.9	6.6	15.1	54.3	23.1	0.9	6.4	14.3	56.2	22.1	1	7.6	12.8	49.5	28.9	1.4	8	12.2	40.6	37.9	1	7.1	13.7	50.7	27.4
Colorado	2.9	1.4	11.5	41.5	42.8	1.8	2.3	8.6	34.2	53	1.8	3.4	9.2	27.3	58.4	1.1	4.4	7.7	20.7	66.1	1.9	2.9	9.2	30.5	55.5
Connecticut	0.1	1.8	25.6	37.4	35.1	0.5	1.8	22.9	27.3	47.5	0.1	1.9	18.2	19.7	60.1	0.1	2	18.5	13.4	67.9	0.2	1.9	21.4	25.9	50.6
Delaware	--	0.9	44.6	6.3	48.2	0.7	1.8	42.6	4.4	50.4	0.5	1.9	36.5	3.8	57.2		2.2	30.9	8.6	58.3	0.3	1.6	40.3	5.5	52.3
District of Columbia	0	2.1	89.6	6.6	1.7	0	1.5	90.7	6.5	1.3	0.2	1.3	91.9	5.4	1.3	0.5	1.3	94.2	3.3	0.8	0.1	1.5	91.4	5.7	1.3
Florida	0.3	0.5	37.7	15.7	45.8	0.2	0.6	32.9	15	51	0.3	1.1	29.1	17.5	52.1	0.1	1.2	31.7	19.5	47.5	0.2	0.9	33.1	16.6	49.2
Idaho	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Illinois	0.2	1.2	43.1	26.9	28.6	0.2	1.6	43.1	19.9	35.3	0.2	1.7	32.1	16.2	49.8	0.1	1.4	29.9	11.7	56.9	0.2	1.5	37.2	18.6	42.5
Indiana	0.1	0.1	23.3	3.6	72.9	0.2	0.2	16.9	3.1	79.6	0.3	0.4	10.8	2.5	86.1	0.2	0.3	11.5	1.6	86.3	0.2	0.2	16.1	2.8	80.7
Iowa	2.1	2.9	12	2.8	80.2	1.1	3.9	8.1	4.4	82.5	0.8	2.5	7.9	3.4	85.3	0.3	2.1	6.8	1.4	89.4	1	2.8	8.5	3	84.8
Kansas	2.4	1.9	19.9	12.5	63.3	1.9	1.8	11.6	10.1	74.8	1.6	1.8	12.7	7.3	76.6	1.2	1.6	8.3	7.1	81.8	1.8	1.7	12.8	9.1	74.6
Louisiana	1	1.2	54.9	1.6	41.3	0.7	1	58.3	1.6	38.3	0.9	1.9	64.4	1.4	31.3	0	2.7	59.7	1	36.7	0.8	1.6	58.9	1.5	37.3
Maine	2	0	0.9	0.3	96.9	0.7	1.8	0.2	0.2	97	0.2	3.5	1.1	0	95.2	0.2	0	1	0	98.8	0.7	1.4	0.8	0.1	96.9
Maryland	0.5	0.8	60.6	2.3	35.8	0.1	1.5	55	3.1	40.4	0	2	43.2	3.1	51.7	0	1.5	60.8	1.3	36.4	0.2	1.4	55.8	2.4	40.2
Massachusetts	0.2	3.6	14.2	30.6	51.4	0.3	3.5	15.3	20.5	60.4	0.3	4.7	14.5	13.9	66.5	0.6	3.3	14.6	11.4	70.1	0.3	3.8	14.7	19.7	61.5
Michigan	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Minnesota	9.4	4.6	22	6.2	57.5	6.9	4.5	14.2	5.6	68.9	4.6	4	12.4	3	75.8	4.6	3.8	9.8	2.5	79.2	5.9	4.2	13.5	4	72.4
Mississippi	0.6	0.5	57.6	0	41.1	0.5	0.5	53.8	0.2	44.9	0.4	0.4	52.9	0.1	46.1	0.7	0.3	55.7	0	43.2	0.6	0.5	55.1	0.1	43.7
Missouri	0.3	0.8	38.5	0.9	59.5	0.1	0.6	25.7	0.6	73.1	0.3	0.9	15.9	0.8	82.1	0.3	0.9	15.2	0.9	82.7	0.2	0.8	24.3	0.8	73.9
Nebraska	4.9	0.8	17	8.3	69	4.1	2.2	10.1	10.7	72.9	3.4	3.2	7.9	5	80.6	3.5	1.4	7.1	6.3	81.6	3.9	2	9.9	7.4	76.9
Nevada	2.5	4	6.5	24.3	62.7	3	2.8	9.2	25.7	59.2	2.6	3.3	11.1	17.5	65.5	2.7	4.3	14	12.1	67	2.7	3.6	11.1	18.3	64.3
New Jersey	0.4	1.8	39	34.5	24.5	0.4	2.8	32.7	26.5	37.6	0.7	2.4	27.3	19.2	50.3	0.7	3.1	22.2	17.2	56.8	0.5	2.5	31.1	25.1	40.8
New Mexico	14.7	1.3	2.2	54.5	27.4	10.3	0.8	3	52.7	33.2	12	0.7	2.8	46.6	37.9	11	0.7	3.1	48.9	36.3	12.1	0.9	2.7	50.5	33.8
North Carolina	4	0.3	36.1	0.9	58.7	2.9	0.6	36.9	1	58.6	2.7	0.7	33.6	0.7	62.4	2.4	1	36.9	0.5	57.2	3.2	0.5	36.1	0.8	59.3
North Dakota	43.2	0	0	2.5	54.3	36.9	2.2	1.1	1.1	58.7	36	1.1	0	1.1	61.8	28.7	0	0	2.8	68.5	35.1	1	0.3	1.8	61.9
Ohio	0.2	0.3	22.3	2.6	74.4	0.1	0.8	20.6	2.4	76.1	0.1	0.7	14.6	1.9	82.6	0.2	0.7	13.6	2.2	83.4	0.2	0.6	17.5	2.3	79.4
Oklahoma	12.6	0.2	17.3	5.4	64.6	11.6	0.4	8.6	4.5	74.5	12.3	0.6	8.1	3.5	75.2	10.9	1	6.7	2.9	78.5	12	0.6	10.4	4.2	72.9
Oregon	4.5	1.9	5.8	13.7	74.1	2.9	2.5	5	10.6	79.1	2.1	2.2	4.9	8	82.8	2.4	2.3	3.7	5.3	86.3	2.8	2.2	4.7	8.8	81.5
Pennsylvania	0.3	1.3	43	12.1	43.4	0.2	2	33.1	8.5	56.2	0.3	1.8	26.2	5.7	66.3	0.2	1.5	23.6	4.6	70	0.2	1.6	31.7	7.8	58.7
Rhode Island	0	4.2	9.4	18.4	68.1	0.2	2.1	9.6	15	73.1	0	2.3	10.4	14.3	73	0	1.9	9.4	12.9	75.7	0.1	2.7	9.7	15.4	72.1
South Carolina	0.4	0	46.6	0.4	50.6	0.3	0.1	46.4	0.5	52.7	0.1	0.2	44.1	0.1	55.5	0.3	0.3	46.2	0.3	52.7	0.3	0.1	46.8	0.4	52.4
South Dakota	70.4	0	0	0.3	29.4	46.8	0	0.9	1.4	50.9	34	0.5	1.6	1.6	62.3	26.1	0.6	1	1	69.4	45.1	0.3	0.9	1.1	52.6
Tennessee	0.1	0.8	31	0.2	67.9	0.1	0.4	20.2	0.4	78.9	0	0.5	15.8	0.3	83.3	0	0.2	23.8	0.2	75.8	0.1	0.5	22.7	0.3	76.4
Texas	0.2	1.3	18.2	54.1	26.2	0.2	1.9	16.1	48.2	33.6	0.3	1.5	17.5	40	40.7	0.3	1.9	18.6	37.5	41.6	0.2	1.6	17.6	46.4	34.2
Utah	7.4	4.6	2.3	15.7	69.9	5	1	1.9	14.1	77.9	3.7	1.6	0.2	11.3	83.2	1.7	1.8	0.9	9.7	85.9	3.4	1.8	1	11.6	82.2
Vermont	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Virginia	0.4	1.6	40.2	3.8	54	0.3	2.6	35.7	5.3	56.1	0.3	3.4	29.5	4.6	62.2	0.6	2.6	25.3	3.6	67.8	0.4	2.5	33.9	4.3	58.9
West Virginia	0	0.1	1.9	0.1	97.9	0.3	0	4.4	0.2	95.1	0.2	0.1	3.5	0	96.2	0	0.1	3.5	0.1	96.2	0.1	0.1	3.4	0.1	96.2
Wisconsin	1.8	1.1	58.5	11.9	26.7	1.8	1.7	47.6	9.8	39.2	2.2	0.9	32.1	6.9	58	2.3	1.4	16.4	4.6	75.3	2.1	1.3	32.9	7.3	56.4
Wyoming	10.1	0.4	1.8	16.3	71.6	7.1	0.2	1.4	14.2	77.1	6.3	0.5	1.8	12	79.4	6.6	1.2	1.2	8.9	84.1	7.3	0.5	1.5	12.3	78.4

--Data not available.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data.

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Table C6.--Sex of dropouts reported as percent of all dropouts, by grade: 1991-92 school year (43 states reporting district-level dropout data)

	Grade 9		Grade 10		Grade 11		Grade 12		Grades 9-12	
	Male dropouts	Female dropouts	Male dropouts	Female dropouts	Male dropouts	Female dropouts	Male dropouts	Female dropouts	Male dropouts	Female dropouts
Alabama	59.9	40.1	56.5	43.5	54.4	45.6	53.6	46.4	56.7	43.3
Arizona	53.1	46.9	53.7	46.3	54.7	45.3	56.3	43.7	54.5	45.5
Arkansas	72.2	27.8	67.4	32.6	66.4	33.6	68.5	31.5	68.2	31.8
California	52.4	47.6	53.9	46.1	55.3	44.7	56.8	43.2	54.6	45.4
Colorado	52.5	47.5	55	45	56.2	43.8	56.8	43.2	55.3	44.7
Connecticut	53.8	46.2	54.7	45.3	54	46	59.4	40.6	55.1	44.9
Delaware	61.2	38.8	57.6	42.4	56.7	43.3	51.6	48.4	57.7	42.3
District of Columbia	51.3	48.7	51	49	55.2	44.8	46.3	53.8	51.3	48.7
Florida	63.1	36.9	59.8	40.2	56.4	43.6	54.6	45.4	58.9	41.1
Idaho	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Illinois	55.7	44.3	55	45	54.6	45.4	56.7	43.3	55.4	44.6
Indiana	59.8	40.2	57.1	42.9	53	47	53.2	46.8	56	44
Iowa	53.6	46.4	53	47	56.9	43.1	55	45	54.9	45.1
Kansas	57.7	42.3	56.6	43.4	53.9	46.1	56.2	43.8	56	44
Louisiana	55.3	44.7	54	46	53.8	46.2	52.5	47.5	54.1	45.9
Maine	52.1	47.9	60.5	39.5	55	45	56.5	43.5	56.2	43.8
Maryland	59.8	40.2	59.6	40.4	56.2	43.8	50.7	49.3	57.2	42.8
Massachusetts	57.9	42.1	57.9	42.1	55	45	57.4	42.6	57	43
Michigan	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Minnesota	53.4	46.6	57.5	42.5	55.3	44.7	57.8	42.2	56.4	43.6
Mississippi	60.8	39.2	56.8	43.2	55.3	44.7	56.8	43.2	57.7	42.3
Missouri	59.2	40.8	57.4	42.6	52.7	47.3	52.8	47.2	55.7	44.3
Nebraska	60.5	39.5	53.4	46.6	50.8	49.2	56.7	43.3	54.8	45.2
Nevada	52.4	47.6	51	49	51.3	48.7	55.2	44.8	52.8	47.2
New Jersey	54.5	45.5	55.6	44.4	54.5	45.5	57.7	42.3	55.4	44.6
New Mexico	53.5	46.5	53.4	46.6	54.1	45.9	54.5	45.5	53.8	46.2
North Carolina	62	38	56.3	43.7	54	46	55.3	44.7	57.7	42.3
North Dakota	58.5	41.5	63.7	36.3	57.2	42.8	57.7	42.3	59.4	40.6
Ohio	60.4	39.6	60.5	39.5	59.7	40.3	56.9	43.1	59.2	40.8
Oklahoma	54	46	54.4	45.6	52	48	52.5	47.5	53.3	46.7
Oregon	48.8	51.2	53.5	46.5	54.9	45.1	59	41	54.8	45.2
Pennsylvania	55.6	44.4	57.3	42.7	56	44	55.5	44.5	56.1	43.9
Rhode Island	63.5	36.5	61.1	38.9	62.1	37.9	53.1	46.9	60.6	39.4
South Carolina	63.1	36.9	60.8	39.2	55.7	44.3	56.4	43.6	60.2	39.8
South Dakota	50.9	49.1	53.9	46.1	52.3	47.7	58.1	41.9	53.6	46.4
Tennessee	61.4	38.6	58.4	41.6	56.4	43.6	54.1	45.9	57.7	42.3
Texas	56.5	43.5	55.8	44.2	53	47	52.5	47.5	54.8	45.2
Utah	51.9	48.1	50.8	49.2	55.5	44.5	57.8	42.2	55.1	44.9
Vermont	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Virginia	61.1	38.9	58.9	41.1	59.1	40.9	55	45	58.9	41.1
West Virginia	62	38	56.3	43.7	54.3	45.7	52.3	47.7	56.2	43.8
Wisconsin	57	43	60.8	39.2	58.2	41.8	60.2	39.8	59.3	40.7
Wyoming	49.8	50.2	58.5	41.5	54.1	45.9	56.9	43.1	55.3	44.7

--Data not available.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data.

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